

Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

I. Intro

- A- Marriage is a natural law designed by God built into the natural world, like any other law God implemented for His creation.
- There are natural laws (biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, etc)
 - There are spiritual laws
 - Principle of harvest – you reap what you sow – true in biology, psychology and spiritually
 - Principle of delayed returns – (multiplication) compounded interest (economy)
 - Cast your bread upon the waters and after many days you will receive a return (**Ecclesiastes 11:1**) – spiritual principle
 - Malachi 2:15 NIV** Has not the one God made you? **You belong to him in body and spirit.** And what **does the one God seek?** **Godly offspring.** So be on your guard, and **do not be unfaithful** to the wife of your youth.
 - God made us in His image – soul/spirit
 - God gave us a body
 - Godly offspring comes by marriage – union of bodies in the right spirit – marriage covenant.
 - Matthew 24:38 NIV** For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark...
 - Marriage was practiced by everyone, good and evil since before the flood. The first people being Adam and Eve, as we will see in the next passage.
 - Matthew 19:4-5 NIV** "**Haven't you read,**" he replied, "**that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' (5) and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?"**
 - From the beginning, this is what God ordained: biologically and spiritually
 - The One Flesh Covenant, between man and woman. For life.
 - Godly offspring cannot be obtained any other way.
 - People get married regardless of their beliefs, culture or traditions
 - It is part of the natural laws of this world. Is there a spiritual component of concern as well? – Remember **godly offspring** – that's what God desires.
 - Marriage has happened since the beginning, like all other natural & spiritual laws – **Matthew 19:8**
- B- Marriage is patterned after God's covenants – **Malachi 2:14**
- It is a binding contract in any culture or peoples
 - It involves a promise – an exchange of vows to be taken seriously
 - It brings blessings when honored
 - It brings curses when dishonored
 - Marriage is best understood when viewed as a **shadow** of the ultimate Gospel Covenant with Jesus Christ
 - Marriage is a **fleshly** covenant
 - As Christians we are betrothed to Jesus – a **spiritual** status
 - Ultimately the Christian will wed Christ – **Mat 22:2; Rev 19:7; 21:9**
- C- God has a plan for the married in Christ – **Ephesians 5:22-33**

- a. Through marriage we can better experience the love of God by learning to love one another in the roles God assigned us
 - b. We are perfected as we learn the role of headship
 - c. We learn about forgiveness, loyalty and honor
 - d. We learn to identify with Jesus' suffering
- D- God has a plan for the single in Christ – **1 Corinthians 7:26-35**
- a. To save you from many troubles in this life! (28)
 - b. To be prepared for the life to come, not be engrossed in this world which is passing away (31)
 - c. To live free from concern of the flesh, to be concerned about the Lord's affairs (32-34)
 - d. To live in undivided devotion to the Lord (35)

II. What, When and Who is a Marriage?

A- What is a Marriage?

- a. A Divine Institution – a contract between man and woman established by God
 - i. God ordained it (**Gen 2:18-24**)
 - 1. He did not want man to be alone.
 - 2. Man needed a helper
 - 3. God made a helper suitable for the man
 - a. That phrase, “helper fit for him”, which in the King James reads, “help meet for him”, is really translated out of two Hebrew words: “*ezer neged*”.
 - i. *Ezer*: aid or help
 - ii. *Neged*: a front, that is, part opposite; specifically, a counterpart, or mate. *Fit for him*.
 - b. “Help meet” also means “helpmate”; *meet (neged)* meaning *suitable mate*, amongst the other definitions above. Therefore, the wife is to be a suitable helper, a **counterpart** to her man.
 - i. Like a lock and a key
 - ii. A nut and a bolt
 - iii. A steering wheel and a car
 - c. Please see [The Woman of Noble Character](#) for an in-depth discussion of the woman as counterpart to the man.
 - ii. God introduced them to each other (**Gen 2:22**)
 - 1. However, this was done after the man sorted through the other creatures of creation – **Genesis 2:19-20**
 - 2. God did not want man to be alone
 - 3. God involved man in the process of finding a suitable helper for him.
 - 4. No suitable helper was found in God's creation with the absence of woman.
 - 5. God takes woman out of the man – **Genesis 2:21-22**
 - 6. Man is satisfied with this suitable helper – counterpart. – **Genesis 2:23**
 - iii. God makes them one flesh; joins them together in the flesh (**Gen 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6**)

1. The union is a union of the flesh, not the spirit
2. This is why marriage ends when someone dies and why there is no marriage in heaven between souls (**Mat 22:29-30**)
- iv. A man and woman are **married** whenever they enter into a **sexual union by mutual consent and commitment as husband and wife**.
 1. Adam was a man; Eve was a woman
 2. They entered into a sexual union by mutual consent
 3. It is assumed they made a covenant (commitment) before God to stay in this married state. *We will examine this later.*
- v. Therefore, marriage is NOT:
 1. **Rape** – not mutual consent – two scenarios given in OT Law:
 - a. Rape of someone betrothed/married – **Deuteronomy 22:25-27**
 - i. Rape – Hebrew *chazaq* – to seize, with strength to overcome; constrain; force
 - ii. Rapist was to receive death penalty
 - iii. Woman was innocent, was not to be treated shamefully nor shunned.
 - b. Rape or manipulation/seduction of a virgin/single – **Deuteronomy 22:28-29**
 - i. Rape – Hebrew *taphas* – to manipulate, to capture and wield; surprise; to seduce.
 - ii. Both are implicated in this situation, “they are discovered”.
 - iii. Not violent rape, but “date rape” by seduction and manipulation.
 - iv. The detail of being discovered together implies some level of mutual responsibility different from the first case.
 - v. The man is held accountable, however, and must marry (provide for) the woman.
 - vi. He is not to divorce her
 - vii. There is no punishment for the woman. Unless you call her having to marry this conniver punishment enough!
 - viii. However, the idea is for her honor to be vindicated.
 - ix. The lesson for men was not to treat women as objects of pleasure. Being a man and a husband is about bearing responsibility and protecting women from being used and discarded.
 - c. Similar case in **Exodus 22:16-17**
 - i. Seduces – Hebrew *pathah* – entice, delude, allure, flatter
 - ii. This woman is also seduced or enticed by the man
 - iii. Marriage can be refused
 - iv. The man still needs to pay
 - v. No punishment for the woman
 2. **Incest** – considered an abomination by God (**Lev 20:17-20**)

- a. Some versions use – “sees/uncover her nakedness” which refers to fornication/adultery, not marriage.
 - b. *Publicly removed/cut off* – refers to some special form of public excommunication, accompanied, it may be, by expulsion from the camp.
 - c. God holds everyone accountable who has disgraced someone else.
3. **Marriage is NOT Casual sex** – fornication dishonors and wrongs your brother and sister (**1Thes 4:1-6**)
- a. Living to please God involves sexual sanctification – **avoiding sexual immorality (fornication – *porneia*)**
 - i. Any kind of sexual stimulation outside of marriage
 - ii. Any kind of sexual *physical* or *virtual* stimulation
 - iii. Anything that may stimulate you sexually (by yourself or with someone else) outside the context of mutually consenting marital sexual relations
 - 1. Fornication – Deuteronomy 22:23-24
 - 2. Adultery – Deuteronomy 22:22
 - 3. Both deserving of death penalty under OT law
 - b. Sexual sanctification also involves *learning to control your own body*
 - i. This phrase in the Greek appears as *know how to possess your own vessel*
 - ii. It is a euphemism of *finding your own wife*
 - iii. So it can also be rendered as *learning to find/acquire your own wife*
 - iv. This phrasing appears in the Jewish Mishna describing the process of betrothal, i.e., the man acquiring a woman to being his wife.
 - v. Both interpretations make doctrinal sense.
 - vi. So you are to be sanctified as you look for a spouse – keep yourself pure in the process!
 - c. ***In a holy and honorable way***
 - i. If we keep to the idea of betrothal, it makes sense when the Holy Spirit teaches us to do this *in a holy and honorable way*.
 - ii. There is a way that orthodox Jews carry out betrothal which is holy and honorable
 - iii. Many cultures have ways of betrothing that emphasize holiness and honor
 - iv. We can say they follow scripture more so than our own culture, which glorifies casual sex and idolizes sensuality.
 - v. Sexual relationships are a most holy gift that can only be enjoyed and explored in the right context given by

God. Outside of that it becomes an uncontrollable force that will burn you and others around you.

- vi. **Song of Solomon 8:6-7 NIV** Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; **for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.** (7) Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one's house for love, it would be utterly scorned.
- vii. The love spoken about here is **affectionate/sexual** love. The love that comes from the passions and urges of the flesh to be held, touched and wanted sexually.
- viii. This is why we use PREPARE/ENRICH assessment to help you evaluate your preparedness for marriage and your compatibility.
- ix. Our aim is to honor marriage and find spouses in a holy and honorable way to give glory to God in our marriages

d. Not in passionate lust

i. Hooking up

1. This the *wham bam thank you ma'am* mentality.
2. Even though it's a phrase coined in the 50's, it still reflects the mentality of those who give in to sensual passions, lacking self-control.
3. Hookup culture – one-night stands, etc.
4. Its roots lie in the early city life of the 1920's.
5. These accept and encourage casual sex encounters without necessarily including emotional intimacy, bonding or a committed relationship.
6. This leaves people feeling even more lonely than usual and devalued as they feed on the animalistic urges of their flesh to no avail.

ii. Sexting

1. Sending provocative and explicit text messages or immodest pictures using apps or social media
2. Not only has it caused people to lose their job or go to jail, but once something is on social media it will be found and used against you, even if you think you have deleted it.
3. People can always screenshot or take a picture of it with another phone and it will be used against you.

iii. "Trying to see if we're sexually compatible before we are married"

1. This is the mentality of the hookup culture.

2. Each generation has an excuse due to the “try before you buy” mentality which cannot apply to the spiritual.
 3. It also reflects the “throwaway society” mantra. Use it and then throw it away.
 4. Playing house - couples who want to live as an exclusive couple without the commitment of marriage.
- iv. There is a hidden emotional, psychological and spiritual cost to approaching sex and marriage without God. Ask anyone who’s been hurt and is still stinging (sometimes decades) because they followed their heart instead of learning to control their own body in a way that is holy and honorable.
 - v. Plain adultery, where one person may be married but looking to get out of the married and into another one.
 - vi. All these relationships are tainted with lust, which is immensely powerful the more you feed it. It will blind you into making many foolish decisions about relationships, hurting yourself and others in the process
- e. Do not wrong or take advantage of your brother or sister**
- i. When we *use* sex the wrong way, it ends up *using* us. It is like money or time
 - ii. We need to learn how to use these tools for relationships in the right context, and they are a blessing. They can greatly enhance our relationships, particularly **marriage**.
 - iii. You’ll find yourself on the wrong end of time, money or sexual relations if you’re self-serving
 - iv. You’ll end up manipulating or being manipulated
 - v. You will wrong somebody, leaving you and them feeling used, treated like an object of desire instead of a person. Treated like a means to an end instead of the end itself.
 - vi. That is **idolatry**! When you end up feeling used or using someone, treated or treating someone as a means to an end – you are steeped in idolatry – you can’t get to know God or know about His love.
- f. God holds accountable/punishes/avenges anyone who takes advantage of someone else, particularly when it is sexual advantage.**
- i. Sexual predators, manipulators or exploiters are not treated kindly by our Lord God.
 - ii. Our Lord avenges those who are victimized, abused or manipulated.

4. Marriage is NOT something to be **dishonored** socially – it is to be *honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure* – **Hebrews 13:4**
 5. Marriage is NOT something to be **judged or gossip about** – each couple needs to work to honor God and keep sanctity in their marriage.
 - a. Only by mutual consent should they seek help in their marriage
 - b. Only if someone is in danger of themselves or others should there be a forced intervention
 - i. What does it mean “in danger of themselves or others”?
 - ii. When someone is involved in something Immoral, illegal, unethical, or hurtful.
- b. Marriage is something to Benefit Mankind
- i. **Not meant to enslave**
 1. **1 Corinthians 7:35 NIV** I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.
 - a. Not only is the admonition about keeping us from unnecessary anxieties, but also to promote good order and secure **undivided devotion to the Lord.**
 - b. Not only can a single life devoted to the kingdom experience this but also a marriage that is in good order and as free from divided interests that come from incompatibility. This is why we use PREPARE/ENRICH and other pre-marriage counseling tools: to encourage this in future families.
 - c. **Compatibility** is the key to reduced anxiety, good order and undivided devotion to the Lord among those who are married. This is not only a principle for relationships but also for any other commitment: jobs, business, etc.
 2. **1 Corinthians 7:15 NIV** But if the unbeliever **leaves, let it be so.** The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in **peace.**
 - a. A marriage ceases to be one when there is **desertion.**
 - b. God has called us to live in **peace.**
 - c. A marriage is not meant for you to be enslaved to an absentee partner.
 - ii. **It Is Meant to Enrich If You Accept It Until Death**
 1. **Matthew 19:9-11 NIV** “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” (10) The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, **it is better not to marry.**” (11) Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.”
 - a. Jesus says this in response to his disciples’ comment on the strictness of marriage
 - b. Marriage is a serious commitment. Make sure you make it of your own free will.

- c. Make sure you know what you're getting into
 - d. This is why we have PREPARE (pre-marriage counseling)
 - e. We want to honor marriage and avoid adultery.
- c. Marriage is a Shadow of Divine Covenants
- i. What is a **Covenant**?
 - 1. A solemn and binding relationship which is meant to last a lifetime.
 - 2. A promise (bond) of faithfulness unto death
 - 3. Covenants involve an accord between at least two people
 - 4. Covenants are meant to last, not be broken
 - a. There are no exceptions to break the marriage covenant except death
 - ii. **Covenant vs. Contract**
 - 1. God views marriage as a divine covenant, not a human contract.
 - a. **Malachi 2:14 ESV** ...the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife **by covenant**.
 - b. **Proverbs 2:16-17 NIV** Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman, from the wayward woman with her seductive words,¹⁷ who has left the **partner of her youth and ignored the covenant** she made before God.
 - 2. The difference? At least three:
 - a. A covenant is based on trust between parties while a contract is based on distrust.
 - b. A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility while a contract is based on limited liability.
 - c. A covenant cannot be broken if new circumstances occur while a contract can be voided by mutual consent.
 - 3. Our society is viewing marriage more and more like a legal contract rather than the one-flesh covenant God designed.
 - a. This is common when a self-serving society looks for the loopholes in laws
 - b. Laws can be used to manipulate instead of ministering
 - c. Power is used to subjugate instead of empowering
 - iii. **Outline of a covenant**
 - 1. The Pledge (Bond) – a promise
 - a. Accompanied with an exchange of words
 - b. Accompanied with a physical exchange or symbol
 - 2. The Establishment of obligations
 - a. The sharing of a common life – goal
 - b. Duties between the partners of the covenant
 - 3. The Ratification
 - a. What seals and binds the covenant
 - b. Usually an external act in keeping with the promise
 - c. Often blood was spilled to illustrate the gravity of the covenant
 - 4. The Witnesses

- a. Speak to the eyewitness testimony necessary because of the obliging nature of covenants
- b. They serve to remind and hold the party accountable to the covenant
- c. The sharing of a meal with the witnesses often took place to commemorate the covenant
- d. The observance of a celebration often took place to honor the covenant

iv. Fulfilled Covenants between God and Man

1. The Sabbath – the Day of Rest – God made it holy (different)
2. After the Flood – The Rainbow – Genesis 8:20-22 - 9:1-17
3. God's Covenant with Abraham – Take possession of the Promised Land – Genesis 15
4. God's Covenant with Abraham – Circumcision – The Father of Many Nations – Genesis 17
5. The Law of Moses – the Old Covenant (Testament) – Exodus 19:5ff
6. Christ in Us, the Hope of Glory – The New Covenant – Colossians 1:24-27

v. The Marriage Covenant – One Flesh (Togetherness) – Between Man and Woman

1. **Malachi 2:14 ESV ...the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth**, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife **by covenant**.
2. We are pledged to one mate
3. We are to keep our pledge holy
4. The consummation of this pledge is sexual union
 - a. The covenant is ratified by sexual union
 - i. The breaking of the hymen – the veil of flesh in the woman spills blood
 - ii. This could be viewed as a blood covenant
 - b. This is what makes the One Flesh Covenant

vi. How it is a shadow to the Ultimate Covenant in Christ

1. We are pledged to one husband – Jesus (**2Co 11:2**)
2. We must keep ourselves pure until the end of our lives, free from evil and full of good. We are to be the **3A bride** to Jesus:
 - a. We are to be attractive to Jesus – **Ephesians 5:25-27**
 - b. We are to adapt to Jesus – **Romans 8:29**
 - c. We are to appease (please and praise) Jesus - **1Pe 2:9**
3. The consummation of the pledge was enacted by our union to Jesus' blood when we were baptized – **Romans 6:3-11**

d. Marriage is a natural law

- i. It works automatically without regard to sin or righteousness, like gravity, procreation, or the sunrise. It is a universal phenomenon.
- ii. It is something that happens between two people who agree to make it happen, whether they are just or unjust, Christian or not.
- iii. Men and women were designed to be married – to procreate as a family unit.

- iv. A man and woman are married whenever they enter into a sexual union by mutual consent and commitment as husband and wife, whether they have experienced previous marriages or not.
- v. Nonetheless, God has a beautiful plan for those who are married in Christ. Christians are in the best position to be blessed by their marriages because they should understand the purpose and power of it.
- e. Christians should understand *what* and *when* a marriage is better than anyone else

B- When is a Marriage?

- a. How and when does God join two to become one flesh?
 - i. Old Testament – Marriage was recognized and honored as a covenant.
 - 1. “... *your wife by covenant.*” – **Mal 2:14b**
 - 2. If there was a sexual relation without a formal covenant it could be considered a marriage – **Deut 22:28-29; Exodus 22:16-17**
 - 3. God always was a witness in the marriage covenant
 - 4. *It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth.* – **Mal 2:14a**
 - ii. New Testament – a marriage is a relational covenant where we pledge to serve and love each other as Christ loved us in the manner of how Jesus serves the church and the church serves Jesus – **Eph 5:25ff**
 - 1. Being that marriage is the shadow of Jesus’ marriage with the church we have a **better understanding** of what it is by what the New Testament teaches.
 - a. God did established marriage before the Old Testament was instituted.
 - b. People got married and given in marriage – **Mat 24:38**
 - c. Many in the Old Testament were polygamists and adulterers if we were to judge them by our understanding of **Matthew 19:4-9**, even after the Old Covenant came into effect.
 - d. In the New Testament, Jesus reminds us of the One Flesh Covenant – between a man and woman – something God joins together and that no man should separate. – **Matthew 19:4-5**
 - 2. The marriage vow (engagement) is really the shadow of baptism
 - 3. Through baptism we enter into our covenant (betrothal) with Jesus.
 - 4. By a covenant a couple enters wedded bliss
 - iii. A man and woman are therefore married whenever they enter into a sexual union by mutual consent and commitment as husband and wife in the manner of a covenant.
- b. **Terms of the marriage covenant**
 - i. Marriage binds for life (**1Co 7:39**)
 - ii. It is only for life on earth (**Mat 22:30**)
 - 1. In heaven we will be married to Christ (**Rev 19:7-9; 21:2**)
 - 2. Parables and allusions speak of this:
 - a. **Mat 9:15** – “*Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.*”
 - b. **Mat 22:2ff** – Parable of the King who gave a wedding feast

- c. **Mat 25:1ff** – Parable of the Ten Virgins
- d. **Luke 12:36** – “...be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks...”
- e. **Luke 14:8** – “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him...”
- f. **John 3:29** – Jesus speaks as the bridegroom. The friend he refers to in this verse is John the Baptizer.
- g. **Romans 7:2-4** – Paul explains how God released Israel from their covenant, dying on the cross, instead of divorcing her for her adultery.
- h. **2Co 11:2** – Paul speaks as betrothing Christians to Jesus
- iii. A marriage can be dissolved
 - 1. By death – **Rom 7:2** – the only accepted way in God’s eyes
 - 2. By adultery – **Mat 19:9**
 - 3. By divorce – **Mat 19:9**
 - 4. By desertion – **1Co 7:15**
 - 5. The last three are ways that man has separated what God has joined together. Not the ideal God wants, but nevertheless, recognized by God as deal-breakers in the marriage covenant.

C- Who makes a Marriage?

- a. One man and one woman – **Gen 2:24**, etc.
- b. Two men or two women together do not make a marriage – **Lev 18:22; 20:13** – it is an abomination...
- c. A marriage is always more than one and no more than two
- d. Marriage is not for everyone (**Mat 19:11-12**)
 - i. Some cannot grasp (accept) this commitment (contract)
 - ii. Eunuchs from birth who may not need to marry (impotent or with low libido or sexual urges)
 - iii. Eunuchs by men – something that was typically done to some slaves (castration) in ancient times by the king to protect their harem
 - iv. Eunuchs by decision for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven

D- The Purpose of Marriage

- a. In the New Testament Marriage is always compared and contrasted to the relationship between Jesus and the church (see all the scriptures we examined before above).
- b. The clearest passage is **Ephesians 5:32**, where Paul speaks of the duties of the husband and wife in light of how the church and Jesus relate to each other.
 - i. Marriage is a living workshop unto perfection of faith
 - ii. The trials and challenges of marriage and parenting deepen our understanding of God’s heart as to how He relates to us
 - iii. These challenges are not necessary for everyone (**1Co 7:32-35**)
 - iv. For those who decide to do it on earth: let your marriage prepare you for the ultimate marriage to your Husband, Jesus.

III. What is Divorce?

A- What is divorce?

- a. Divorce is a broken covenant
 - i. Since marriage is basically a contract (covenant) of exclusivity between a man and a woman, similar to the covenant of exclusivity God seeks with man, it follows that *divorce* is the breaking of this contract.
 - ii. A contract or covenant cannot be kept unilaterally. Without mutual consent there is nothing to keep.
 - iii. The covenant has been adulterated in some fashion.
 1. To adulterate is to reduce the purity of an article by the addition of a foreign or inferior substance.
 2. Something has been introduced that has adulterated the covenant.
 3. In a marital relationships something foreign to the covenant comes in and it is now a “love triangle”.
 - a. A foreign third party makes you incapable of fulfilling your vows to the covenant
 - b. This could be another person, vice or addiction.
 - c. All these form “love triangles” that render a person unable to fulfill their loyalty.
 4. There is a distraction from the vows.
 5. Loyalty to the covenant has been broken.
 6. This is how idolatry is described by God – as adultery.
 - a. Idolatry is defined an anything/anyone that supersedes your relationship with God.
 - b. It causes you to forsake your first love.
 - iv. Since the vows are not being kept that can lead to a formal divorce, or cancellation of the marriage contract.
 - v. People who get divorced will undoubtedly see the marriage as a *contract* instead of a *covenant*.
 1. Confidence has been lost and instead of a beautiful covenant of love they see themselves as tied to a contract they no longer want.
 2. The divorce happens first in the mind. If the mind is not changed the divorce will be manifested legally.
 - vi. God did not want to keep His covenant with Israel if she did not want to keep it:
 - vii. **Jeremiah 31:31-32 ESV** *Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.*
 1. God saw himself as a husband whose covenant was broken by adultery
 2. God send Israel away with a certificate of divorce:
 3. **Jeremiah 3:8a NIV** I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries.

- a. A certificate of divorce was given, according to the Law of Moses, when something indecent (*uncleanness* – KJV; nudity, shame) was found in your wife. **Deut 24:1-4**
 - i. This allowed the woman to remarry again and not be destitute, at the whim and mercy of whatever the man said was indecent about her.
 - ii. This was done to protect the women in a society dominated by men.
- b. This is not the same as finding out your wife was promiscuous or adulterous. If a man disliked (*hates* - KJV) his wife, it was usually for the reason of fornication (promiscuity before marriage), i.e., she was not a virgin. **Deut 22:13ff**
 - i. The woman was to be stoned if she was found to be a fornicator.
 - ii. Adultery and fornication carried the death penalty
 - iii. If the man was wrong and was just trying to shame his wife he was fined and could not divorce her as long as he lived.
- b. Divorce is often preceded by an irreparable relationship
 - i. Something has happened in the mind of the person who is turning to divorce.
 - 1. Has the covenant been broken?
 - 2. Has something happened?
 - ii. They have lost the will to remain loyal to the covenant
 - 1. Is there sin in one or both?
 - 2. Is there faithlessness?
 - 3. Because of unrepentant sin there is no more desire to continue
 - iii. Adultery destroys the covenant
 - 1. Sin taints the relationship
 - 2. Sin hardens the heart
 - 3. Beware sin doesn't harden your heart to the point of no return
 - iv. **Hebrews 3:13 NIV** But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.
 - v. Be aware of Satan's Master Plan of destruction:
 - vi. **Ephesians 4:17-19 NIV** So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. (18) They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. (19) Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.
- c. Divorce exists because of sin – because of hardness of heart (**Mat 19:3-9**), but it never was part of the plan – *from the beginning it was not so...*
 - i. It is something that God hates (**Mal 2:16**) – nonetheless, He himself considers it for those who've blasphemed the Spirit (**Mark 3:29**).
 - ii. God dissolves the pledge of marriage to Christ for Christians who terminate their loyalty to Him:

1. It is not any one sin that terminates our covenant with God, but a heart that has been hardened to the truth – a heart that ignores truth and seeks to return to evil – an unfruitful branch (**John 15:1-2; Luke 9:62**).
2. **Jer 3:8** – *She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce...*
3. **Revelation 21:8 ESV** *But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, **which is the second death.***
4. As long as we are in the world there will be divorce. Not even God, Who hates divorce, can prevent from divorcing Himself from those who once pledged themselves to Him but later on want nothing to do with Him.
5. In the same way, since divorce has to do with two people, it is often beyond the control of any one person.
6. A covenant or contract cannot be kept unilaterally.

B- When is divorce?

- a. When a spouse has decided it is not worth it to continue with their commitment to their spouse.
 - i. There are too numerous circumstances reasons or events to list that can make someone decide to discontinue their commitment to their spouse. I am listing here the reasoning that should take place within those who belong to Christ.
 - ii. Most of them have to do with progressive and unrepentant sin in their own life:
 1. Faithlessness – loss of trust or faith in God which leads to:
 2. Immorality – lustful thoughts, lack of finding satisfaction in their spouse which can lead to:
 3. Lack of self-control – lustfully looking at others, engaging in pornography, flirting and eventually:
 4. Adultery
 - iii. When this happens, divorce is imminent unless there is **reconciliation, first to God, then to the spouse.**
 - iv. If this happens between a Christian and an unbeliever, the Christian should remember forgiveness is what is on God's mind
 1. God does not force marriage on people – but He does not promote divorce.
 2. God promotes peace:
 - a. Sometimes the Christian has no other recourse. We cannot control what people think or will do:
 - i. Peace is important – **1Co 7:15**
 1. If someone is not content to live with their spouse, particularly an unbeliever who wishes not to remain with his Christian spouse – the Christian spouse has no control over this and there has been a divorce.
 2. Marriage is not meant to enslave
 - b. God desires for the unbelieving spouse to become a believer – **1Co 7:13-16**

- i. Here the Christian's influence is priceless
 - ii. The Christian should decide when the marriage has been irreparably violated and offer peace and forgiveness if it has not been irreparably violated.
- b. When unrepentant adultery takes place
 - i. When a spouse dismisses their loyalty and fornicates with another on a regular basis, thus implying they want to *marry* that other person. This is what the Jews were accustomed to practicing. **They wanted to divorce to marry someone else.** They had coveted their neighbor's wife and were doubly guilty by breaking up two marriages.
 - ii. "Adultery" is a special kind of "fornication," and fornication is an act of sexual union between two people who are not married to each other. Fornication becomes adultery whenever one or both of the parties are currently bound in marriage to someone else. Thus, the introduction of a third party "adulterates" the relationship between a husband and his wife, just as the intrusion of a foreign substance adulterates a food or medicine, spoiling its purity.
 - iii. We have to understand Jesus raised the bar on adultery in **Matthew 5:27-28**: *ESV "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*
 - iv. Someone who is not satisfied with their marriage and decides to feed his lust with his eyes puts himself on the road to adultery.
 - v. This is the specific issue Jesus deals with in Matthew 19:9. The men were lusting/coveting after other married women and fornicating with them to justify a divorce. Or vice-versa, divorcing their wives to marry that other woman.

C- God hates divorce! Anytime, anywhere, for any reason!

- a. Unfortunately, the nature of the human heart is one that seeks loopholes in the law. People want to know what they can get away with. That in itself is the nature of sin. In the Old Testament adultery was often seen as the loophole for divorce.
 - i. This is why Jesus was asked: "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" (**Mat 19:3**)
 - ii. Jesus does not respond to the question because it is a wrong question.
 - 1. Does someone who wishes to be baptized ask, "For what reasons I can break this commitment I am about to get into with Jesus?"
 - 2. In the same way, if you truly understand *marriage* you truly understand the nature of *covenants* – they are binding unto death, which is what Jesus points out at the start of His answer:
 - iii. Jesus' response is in keeping with the nature of covenants: **Matthew 19:4-6** *ESV* He answered, "*Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.*"
 - 1. The reference to "one flesh" is a reference to the covenant of marriage.
 - 2. Jesus says it was designed to be an everlasting covenant from the beginning – not to be broken by man.

- iv. Divorce violates the sanctity of the covenant
 1. It reduces the covenant to a lie
 2. It compromises marriage
 3. It dishonors men and women before God and before each other
 - a. The witnesses at your covenant ceremony will ridicule you
 - b. They witnesses themselves are dishonored by your belittlement of the covenant
- v. The disciples understood the gravity of the *blood covenant* of marriage
 1. Their response: "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." – **Mat 19:10**
 2. They understood marriage is a covenant unto death and that you need to count the cost before joining someone in that covenant
- b. Many in our culture use divorce as a **loophole** to get out of a marriage to get another spouse
 - i. **Matthew 5:31-32 NIV** "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' (32) But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, **makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**
 1. Here Jesus contrasts the OT attitude that had developed in the Jews versus the reality of what was from the beginning.
 2. You divorce your spouse without just cause and you leave them open to be the victim of adultery as well as anyone who marries her. That's a lot of adultery!
 3. **Deuteronomy 24:1-4 NIV** If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him **because he finds something indecent about her**, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, (2) and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, (3) and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, (4) then her first husband, who divorced her, **is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD.** Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.
 4. Notice how there was divorce and remarriage happening here, even under the strict Old Testament Law.
 5. But remember, this example of divorce was not because of adultery, but because the man claimed there was something displeasing, something that was causing him to be ashamed of his wife.
 6. This is pretty much the picture of people in the world today, no? divorcing for any reason. As disciples of Jesus, we need to hold marriage to a higher standard.
 7. They were divorcing their wives for something petty, or what many say today, "irreconcilable differences", but it was not because there had been adultery. This is why Jesus said Moses had permitted divorce, because these reasons illustrated their hardness of heart.
 8. If there was adultery the results would be stoning (**Deut 22:13ff**).

9. interestingly, there was a detestable thing which happened if the original wife and husband remarried since this marriage was already adulterated by others.
 10. This was because the woman had already been defiled (rendered unclean) by her other marriages.
 11. None of these reasons, though, carried the death penalty and neither the husbands or wives were to be shunned or disciplined in any way if they engaged in these divorces and remarriages. Something to keep in mind as we do our study.
 12. This passage described the mentality the Jews were defending by their exploitation of the adultery loophole.
- ii. **Matthew 19:9 NIV** I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality (fornication), and marries another woman **commits adultery**.
 - iii. Jesus says adultery is committed when divorce happens without the just cause of someone having been sexual immoral in their marital covenant.
 - iv. "For better or for worse" in the martial vows emphasizes the promise to love, honor and protect (obey) regardless of what happens. We need to learn to go through the difficult tests of faith to weather our marriages against any challenge thrust on them.
 1. **Grass is Greener on the Other Side Syndrome or FOMO**
 2. We are fooled into thinking we will be better off with someone else when in reality we are the ones preventing blessings.
 3. Social Media has exacerbated the syndrome even more. We think we would be happier if our circumstances changed, but it is we who need to change our circumstances. Jesus taught the people of the first century they were not victims of circumstances but masters of their destiny. We have the power to change ourselves first so our trajectory in life is positive.
 4. Maybe your situation at home has become predictable, your relationship with your spouse stale, lacking intimacy.
 5. Suddenly you notice your co-worker/neighbor/friend more – you're "looking" to see if there is something else, as David looked out the window and saw Bathsheba.
 6. You get FOMO, thinking you're missing out on something. That's the lie. What you're really missing out on is the opportunity to make things better for you and your spouse within the blessings and influence God has already given you!
 - v. **Mark 10:11-12 NIV** He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman **commits adultery against her**. (12) And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, **she commits adultery**."
 1. Here Jesus makes it clear this applies to the husband as well as the wife.
 2. The other passages mostly mention the male as being held responsible since under the Law of Moses a woman didn't have the right to divorce her husband.
 3. **Mark 10:11-12** taken by itself would indicate that divorce is forbidden under all circumstances. But in **Matthew 19:9**, we know Jesus gives an

- exception. **1 Co 7:15** also describes the exception of when an unbelieving partner deserts a Christian spouse.
4. The Jews wanted to divorce to marry another – looking for a loophole in marriage to fulfill the coveting of another man’s wife.
 5. This is what this was about – coveting. This is what Jesus is addressing here. If you divorce your wife to marry another, not only do you commit adultery in your marriage, but in the other woman’s marriage as well!
 - vi. Assuredly there are difficulties connected with the whole subject of divorce and remarriage. People create marital tangles so involved that it takes the wisdom of a Solomon to extricate them. The best way to avoid these tangles is to avoid divorce. Divorce places a cloud and a question mark over the lives of those involved. When divorced people seek fellowship in a local church, the elders must review the case in the fear of God. Every case is different and must be considered individually. – *Believers Bible Commentary*
 - vii. These verses show Jesus’ concern not only for the sanctity of marriage, but also for the rights of women. Christianity gives to women a standing in honor not found in other religions. – *Believers Bible Commentary*
- c. These Jews in Matthew 19 wanted to know when it is OK to divorce, as many people in our society do. Is that the right question to ask though?
- i. The Jews who asked Jesus the first question in Matthew 19:3 then ask him about Moses’ certificate of divorce:
 - ii. **Matthew 19:7 NIV** “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”
 1. Jesus said Moses permitted divorce because their hearts were hard. This was mainly done in the OT to protect the woman who was left without a provider.
 2. I want you to understand something that is revealed here concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Even though Jesus speaks of marriage as a natural law, “it was not this way from the beginning.” – **Mat 19:8**, He specifically addresses the Jews in this case by alluding to Moses’ provision of the certificate of divorce.
 - a. God wasn’t legislating and instructing the whole world concerning marriage – He was specifically addressing His people since they were to hold marriage to a higher standard.
 - b. It is IN CHRIST that we are called to honor marriage and to keep the marriage bed pure and free of adultery (**Heb 13:4**).
 - c. It is IN CHRIST that we can start over again to live lives that are pleasing to God no matter what sins we have done in the past.
 3. We notice from Jesus’ response that hardness of the heart due to sin is what leads to divorce.
 - iii. When is something born of sin considered OK? It is not a question whether it is OK or not – it happens. This calls for maturity, grace and discernment.
 1. Just because a girl has conceived out of wedlock should we hate the girl or her baby?
 2. Just because two men have fornicated together, should we hate them?
 3. We hate the sin, not the sinner.

4. If they are penitent, we need to bear with them.
 5. Our job as Christians is to show the grace of God and comfort those under trials just as God has comforted us.
 6. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, (4) who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
- d. What should we do when divorce happens in the church?
- i. Divorced people need our love and forgiveness, regardless of what has happened.
 - ii. The Bible does not issue any mandate to disfellowship brethren who have divorced.
 - iii. Here's what the Spirit told the Corinthian church in a case where a member of the church had grieved everyone because of his sin:
 1. **2 Corinthians 2:5-11 NIV** If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. (6) The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. (7) Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. (8) I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. (9) Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. (10) Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, (11) in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.
 2. The guilt and the shame people feel about their sin and their broken relationships causes them grief and us as well, because we are a family.
 3. This punishment is often sufficient for the penitent person.
 4. We need to offer our support and comfort, so they are not overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.
 5. We comfort by reaffirming our love for them.
 6. We need to be careful not to withhold our love and grace, for this is how Satan tries to outwit us, turning us against each other.
 7. We need to be aware of this scheme he perpetrates to attempt to destroy families and churches.
 - iv. If after divorce they decide to each remarry, they need our counseling, love and support. They have been forgiven, if they repent, in the same way the girl who conceived out of wedlock and then men who fornicated have been forgiven if they repent.
 - v. We will examine this remarriage in the next section.
- e. **We are to honor marriage: Hebrews 13:4 NIV** Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.
- i. When a marriage is dead except for the legal paperwork, why should it be preserved and depicted as God's idea of a marriage? It does nothing to indicate the honorable nature of a marriage.

- ii. This is why we offer marriage counseling, to encourage couples to work on their marriage and learn to honor God in their relationship with each other.
- iii. Jesus did not put the law above mercy and the service of the people. We are not having relationships with the Law, we are having a relationship with God, and He is about relating to people.
- iv. The law has its purpose, to point us to sin. But the Law is not our Savior.
- v. Every time the Pharisees opted to pronounce judgement because of their legalism, Jesus pointed them to the true purpose of the Law, which is to serve man, not the Law.
- vi. The Pharisees had gone to such extremes in their legalism that they had forgotten what the Law was there to do. They perceived Jesus as a lawbreaker rather than someone who was teaching them to use the Law to become more like God in His righteousness. **The element of mercy and compassion was forgotten.** The Spirit was taken out of worshipping God “in Spirit and in Truth”. They worshipped the Law instead of God. Jesus was teaching them about the ultimate reality of the Law—to point out God's holiness. The Law, however, in and of itself, cannot make us like God or grant us holiness (Romans 3:20ff). Obedience to God’s Word, out of having sincere faith that God speaks truth, is what is credited unto us as righteousness (Genesis 15:6). God gives us His Law to establish a relationship with Him, not with His Law. The Law was made for man, not man for the Law (Mark 2:27).
 - 1. **Mark 2:27 NIV** Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”
 - 2. **Matthew 12:7 NIV** If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent.
- vii. To truly honor the marriage in the sight of God, we need to learn to honor God as individuals and then to honor each other in the marriage covenant. That’s is how we will avoid being hypocrites and liars in our covenant.

D- What Divorce is not

- a. A piece of paper issued by a human court
- b. A temporary separation (**1 Co 7:10-15**)
- c. Being released by the death of a spouse
- d. An unforgivable sin
- e. “Continuing adultery”

IV. When Can “Remarriage” Occur?

- A- I want to first clarify that “remarriage”, as we have branded it, is not a biblical term. We don’t find that word or concept in the bible. It is simply marriage. Whether it is the first, second, or third time. Let’s call bible things by bible names.
- B- **Remarriage** occurs whether it is permissible or not; whether it is moral to do so or not. It was happening among the Jews as early as when the Law of Moses was put into effect. Even Jesus recognized the other union as *marriage* in **Matthew 19:9** – calling it so, “...and marries another...”
 - a. Jesus doesn’t say “remarries”; He says “marries another”

- b. We already saw in **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** how God considered *remarriage* as no less than a *marriage*. Same responsibilities and vows are in effect, whether the first, second or third time.
 - c. Though the marriage of a divorced person may indeed begin with an act of adultery, once the old marriage has been broken and the new one consummated, there is no evidence in the language of the Law of Moses or from Jesus to indicate that the new marriage is any less binding than the old one was.
 - i. Yes, a person who gets divorced for any reason, barring adultery, commits adultery. She is guilty of adultery and needs to seek forgiveness from the Lord as with any other sin: hatred, lying, stealing, etc.
 - ii. The same goes for the person who committed adultery and therefore broke up the marriage. If the person is penitent and seeks to be reconciled to the Lord, he will be forgiven as with any other sin.
 - iii. As a church, our job is to support them and comfort them, as any other penitent person who seeks to be right with the Lord.
 - iv. Its been my experience, for the last 30 years, that those who are not penitent about divorce or adultery are not interested in living right with the Lord and therefore leave the church.
 - v. There is not protocol for disfellowship for someone who has divorced. There is protocol for disfellowship for unrepentant adultery.
 - d. Remember God's law of marital union is part of the body of natural law which he set in operation in the beginning, and that it works automatically without regard to sin or righteousness.
 - e. Divorce usually happens because of sin, but marriage is never described as a sin.
 - i. As a matter of fact, one of the demon doctrines described by Paul concerned the prohibition of married:
 - ii. **1 Timothy 4:1-3 (NIV)** The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.² Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.³ They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.
 - iii. Prohibition of eating certain foods and/or marriage are hallmarks of demonic doctrine.
- C- Living in Adultery?
- a. Some describe the “remarriage” of someone after committing adultery as “living in adultery”.
 - b. The phrase is not found in the Bible
 - i. This is the concept that a person who has been divorced *unscripturally* and marries another is actually committing fornication over and over with their new spouse.
 - ii. There is no *scriptural* or *unscriptural* divorce or marriage. There is just *marriage* and *divorce*. There isn't even *remarriage*. The adjective “scriptural” or “unscriptural” or the term “remarriage” intends to convey the idea that it was done by the scriptures or not, but the reality is it is just added to convey a

- doctrinal viewpoint that is not found in scripture.** That is why the emphasis is made. The scriptures make no such emphasis. If you find it, let me know.
- iii. **Mat 19:9** says “commits adultery”, not “keeps on committing adultery”.
 - iv. We’re not defending divorce here, but we want to make sure we are not saying or supporting things God wouldn’t, like prohibiting marriage.
- c. The **Greek tense** in Matthew 19:9; Luke 16:18 and Mark 10:11-12 is the **present** tense.
- i. It refers to action that is occurring in the present or to an ongoing action
 - ii. It usually describes an action that usually occurs in the present time
 - iii. The *imperfect* indicates a continuous action normally occurring in the past
 - iv. The *perfect* indicates a completed action whose effects are felt in the present. This action normally occurred in the past.
 - v. Here we discover that the *perfect tense* refers to action that started in the past and continues in the present. The *imperfect tense* refers to ongoing action in the past. In sharp contrast, the **Greek present tense** refers to action that begins in the present and ends in the present.
 - vi. A good example of the present tense action is found here:
 1. **Acts 9:34 NIV** “Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat.” Immediately Aeneas got up.
 2. In this verse, “heals” is in the Greek present tense. Now notice that Peter declares that Aeneas experienced healing in the present, but then immediately Aeneas got up. That was action of a very short duration. That is, the present tense does not refer to ongoing action over a long period of time.
 3. It would be incorrect to assume the text was saying
 - a. Jesus is healing you – continuous action, implying the healing was not complete but requires more time.
 - b. Jesus continuous to heal you – present into the future
 - c. It is simply “Jesus has healed you”. It happened in the present and ends in the present. It is complete.
- d. The **Greek tense** in Matthew 5:32 is the **aorist** tense
- i. This tense refers to a completed action
 - ii. The aorist indicates an undefined action normally occurring in the past
 - iii. Since the aorist tense refers to punctiliar action—at a point in time—**it can approximate the “quick” action of the present tense.**
 - iv. Remember, the present tense does not refer to *ongoing action* that began in the past and continues into the present.
 - v. **Matthew 5:32 NIV** But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery (*commit adultery* - NASB), and anyone who marries a divorced woman *commits adultery*.
 - vi. The Greek tenses of the verb, *moicheuo*, translated as “commit adultery” and then as “commits adultery” in Matthew 5:32 are both **aorist tenses** or action at a point in time.
 1. That is, the committing of adultery occurs at some unspecified time—some point in time. The action is punctiliar.
 2. It is not continuously being applied into the future.
 - vii. This verse is a variant of Matt 19:9 as well as:

1. **Luke 16:18 (NIV)** Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and **the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**
2. **Mark 10:11-12 (NIV)** Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. ¹² And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.
 - a. This one in Mark is simply reciprocating the actions for both men and women.
 - b. This is also another way to interpret Matthew 5:32 and Luke 16:18, as applying to both men and women.
 - c. Since Matthew 19:9 seems to single out men in committing adultery, in these other three verses Jesus is making sure the women also take heed.
3. Two variants of these verses say something a little different than the others:
 - a. In Luke Jesus says “a man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”
 - b. This one is simply reciprocating to the woman what Jesus said to the man. *If the woman divorces to marry another man, they commit adultery.*
 - c. In Matthew 5:32 he says “anyone who divorces his wife makes her the victim of adultery.”
 - d. She is the victim of adultery simply because her husband left her and committed adultery, so her marriage has been adulterated – she’s been the victim of adultery.
 - e. It can also be because she’s left open to the possibility of marrying again by being abandoned? So when she marries again adultery will be committed? The Law didn’t say that.
 - i. We must question the possibility that the action of a husband can make his wife a sinner. Jesus was probably commenting on Deut. 24:1-4 which specifically allowed a divorced woman to be remarried, **but she could not later return to her first husband because she had been defiled by his action.** – Cecil Hook
 - f. **Deuteronomy 24:4 (NIV)** ...then her first husband, who divorced her, **is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled.** That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD.
 - g. Her marriage with the first husband had been adulterated but not so with the second. It seems that she had been made the **victim of adulteration rather than bearing the guilt of it.** – Cecil Hook
- viii. To recap, the present tense and the aorist tense in all these verses refer to action of short duration. Jesus is not referring to the life of an ongoing adulterous relationship. Men and women who have committed adultery once are not adulterers or adulteresses the rest of their lives, unless they do not repent.

- ix. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)** Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ **And that is what some of you were.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
- x. Every English translation of the Bible renders the words of Jesus in this passage "commits adultery," or "shall commit adultery" -- never "keeps on committing."
- xi. The adultery is committed when:
 - 1. A man divorces his wife to marry another woman
 - 2. A man marries the original spouse after they have been married to other people
 - 3. The spouse fornicates with another while being married
- e. Understanding the **Greek and English syntax** is important as well. The use of the *conjunction* **AND** in English, **KAI** in the Greek, help us understand what is considered adultery and what is not.
- f. **Matthew 19:9 (NIV)** I tell you that **anyone who divorces his wife**, except for sexual immorality, **and marries another woman commits adultery.**
 - i. **And** is a *conjunction*, meaning that the adultery is committed when there is a divorce to marry another. *Anyone who divorces his wife AND married another woman – commits adultery*
 - ii. Is the adultery the new marriage? No, the Law didn't say such a thing
 - iii. Is the divorce the adultery? No, the law didn't say such a thing either.
 - iv. The adultery is speaking to the **motive** of the divorce in this case: divorcing to marry another.
 - v. This speaks to the 10th commandment:
- g. **Exodus 20:17 (NIV)** You shall not covet your neighbor's house. **You shall not covet your neighbor's wife**, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.
 - i. Jesus says this coveting (lust) commences with the eyes:
 - ii. **Matthew 5:27-28 (NIV)** You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman **lustfully** has **already committed adultery with her in his heart.**
 - iii. 7th commandment: **Exodus 20:14 (NIV)** You shall not commit adultery.
 - iv. He's combining the 7th and 10th commandment for them to further their understanding since they were trying to take advantage of the divorce loophole in the law of Moses to break their vows to their wives.

D- "Guilty" & "Innocent" Parties? Which can remarry?

- a. Those who divorce by fornication are not identified by Jesus as *guilty* or *innocent*.
- b. Whether guilty or innocent, when a divorce happens by fornication both people are loosed from the marriage.
- c. The loosed persons will do what they do.
- d. Those who've undergone a divorce by fornication, whether guilty or innocent, need our love and our forgiveness more than anything to be able to continue on the narrow path

- e. Only those Christians who choose to remarry after their one-flesh covenant has ended by the death of their spouse are free to remarry in the Lord, without a guilty conscience – **1 Co 7:8-9, 39; 1 Tim 5:14**
- f. Those Christian spouses who've been deserted by their unbelieving spouses are not *enslaved* (under bondage); meaning, their covenant has been dissolved and they are free to remarry – **1 Co 7:15**

E- Separation or celibacy requirement for the “guilty” party?

- a. Once the ties of a former marriage have been severed by fornication or abandonment by a non-Christian spouse (a divorce has occurred), the formerly married person is *loosed*.
 - i. The people cannot be considered as committing adultery in their new marriage since they are no longer married to their former spouses!
 - ii. The adultery was committed when they divorced their spouse to marry another.
 - iii. To say they commit adultery if remarried is to imply they are still married to the persons that divorced them. This was not even the view in **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**.
 - iv. There is no celibacy requirement for divorced people who committed adultery in their former marriage. To imply that would be in direct violation of 1 Tim 4:3.
 - v. The committed adultery is an event that happened, not a continual event.
- b. The best they can do is ask God and their former spouse for forgiveness and resolve never to repeat the mistake.
- c. Better to follow the admonition of Paul: *“Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. ... Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But even if you do marry, you have not sinned...”* (**1 Cor. 7:20, 27-28**).
 - i. Remain in the situation you were in when you were called: when you were baptized
 - ii. Were you engaged/married? Continue on with the marriage
 - iii. Were you divorced/widowed? Don't seek a marriage.
 - iv. But if you do marry, you have not sinned.
- d. To impose celibacy is to support doctrines of demons (**1Tim 4:3**)

F- What should the church (leaders) encourage or discourage?

- a. We should not encourage divorce
 - i. Jesus did not encourage divorce, he just stated plainly what God had done and said from the beginning
 - ii. We know God hates divorce
 - iii. However even God gave Israel a certificate of divorce since Israel had abandoned her covenant.
 - iv. We need to encourage a troubled marriage to focus on their pledge to God as Christians and their pledge to each other in marriage
 - v. We can offer ways to help them build their bonds again
 - 1. Through seminars
 - 2. Counseling
 - 3. Mentorship
 - vi. One thing we should not do is ignore troubled marriages
- b. Churches are to honor marriage and discourage adultery and sexual sins

- i. **Hebrews 13:4 (NIV)** Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.
- ii. Everyone needs to respect and honor marriage
 - 1. Don't have sex before marriage
 - 2. Don't see others as objects you need to possess
 - 3. Don't seek to be married to get something in return.
 - 4. Seek to understand the commitment and vows you are to keep in a marriage to understand its power for you and in society.
 - 5. Respect its sanctity and place in the church and in the world
 - 6. Don't support homosexual marriage
 - 7. Give proper counseling to those in troubled marriage
 - 8. Discourage divorce
- iii. God is the judge of the adulterer and the sexually immoral
 - 1. The church can judge certain things, like those who are serial sexual offenders and adulterers
 - 2. The church can disfellowship such serial offenders (1 Co 5:1-6; 9-13)
 - 3. This can include adultery as well, since adultery was considered a serious offense in the Law, met with stoning
- iv. **We should encourage strong marriages**
 - 1. Teach the singles and the young people what is expected in a marriage
 - a. Teach the young people what is expected
 - b. Godly sexual education – song of Solomon
 - c. Hold those who are courting accountable
 - d. Have pre-marital counseling
 - 2. We should continually offer encouragement for those who are married
 - a. Seminars
 - b. Classes
 - c. Fellowships
 - 3. Churches need to have programs in place to prevent marriages from deteriorating
 - a. Marriage counselors available
 - b. Classes available
 - c. Seminars available
 - 4. If there are too many "late" marriage counseling sessions taking place (when adultery or other problems are already happening) there are not enough preventive measures occurring in the congregation.
- c. We also should encourage love and forgiveness when a divorce has happened

V. Answers to Common Objections

The objections listed here cannot be handled with scripture since there are no verses that speak of them. We have to resort to defining the misconstrued view with scripture to understand why the objection itself is non-consequential or a null argument or question/objection. We have to adhere to Solomon's warnings about the writing of many books and the use of many words, and how the quest for wisdom itself can become something maddening, since there are many rabbit holes that can capture and distract our attention from the core and context of the topic.

Ecclesiastes 10:12-14 (NIV) Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are consumed by their own lips. (13) At the beginning their words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness — (14) and fools multiply words. No one knows what is coming— who can tell someone else what will happen after them?

Galatians 6:15 (NIV) Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:16-18 (NIV) So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. (17) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (18) All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...

There is a threshold that is crossed when being born-again. A non-Christian crosses a threshold where he becomes a new creation, so any wrongdoing before is forgiven and they move forward in newness of life.

1. **Isn't marriage a spiritual bond as well as a physical one?**
 - a. No, the one flesh covenant is One flesh, not One Spirit. – Genesis 2:24
2. **Are there *scriptural* and *unscriptural* marriages?**
 - a. A marriage is a marriage. David's second wife was as much his wife as the first one. The woman at the well had five husbands, not one husband and 4 lovers.
3. **Doesn't Jesus say, "What God has joined, let no man separate"?**
 - a. He wouldn't want men to separate what He has joined, but it happens
 - b. God is the giver of life and he should be the only one to take it away, which is why God gives us the 6th commandment: though shall not murder. Even though God says that, people go ahead and murder anyway.
 - c. People have taken lives that are not theirs to take.
 - d. People separate what God has joined together.
4. **Doesn't 1 Co 7:15 contradict Matthew 19:9ff?**
 - a. Romans 7:2 can be taken to be a contradiction of what Jesus said in Matthew 19 as well!
 - b. Rom 7:2 states the ideal law of marriage. It is mutually exclusive from cases where there is adultery or abandonment. If it were not, then Jesus would be contradicting himself when he wrote about the exception of fornication.
 - c. The same goes for Paul, writing in Rom 7:2 the law of marriage and then in 1 Co 7:15 establishing a mutually exclusive scenario of abandonment.
 - d. Mutual exclusivity establishes that both statements cannot be true. Meaning, if you're in a marriage where there has been no fornication nor abandonment, you're bound to it for as long as you live.
 - e. That doesn't mean people won't divorce. They still do it, even in the church. People will do what they do.
 - f. The difference between 1 Co 7:15 and Matthew 19:9 and related passages is that fornication is the only permitted exception to be released from a marriage, other than death. In 1 Co 7:15 abandonment by a non-Christian spouse releases you from that marriage. That's the main difference.

- g. It is also important to note Paul is applying the principle of Jesus' clause of *except for fornication*, to abandonment in 1 Co 7:15.
- i. This teaches me Paul was not teaching something new, but simply applying the principle that a covenant cannot be unilaterally held.
 - ii. Whether the marriage has ended by fornication or abandonment, the result is the same, the person left has no marriage left and therefore can divorce and remarry if they wish.
 - iii. The situation in 1 Co 7:15 only applies to marriages where one spouse is a non-believer and the other is a believer.
 - iv. If two Christians divorce/separate, they should remain unmarried or else be reconciled (1 Co 7:10-11).
- 5. Isn't there an example of God condoning divorce in Ezra 10:10-11?**
- a. What Ezra did was most likely based on a requirement from the Law of Moses (Deut 7:3). That prohibition was not to marry any of the tribes in Canaan. This was not because of racial bias, as the passage explains, but because of the practices of the tribes in Canaan, which were abominable to God, and these people also worshipped a foreign God.
 - i. Pre-law, Abraham married an Egyptian, Hagar.
 - ii. Soldiers were allowed to marry foreign captives (Deut 21:10-14).
 - iii. These wives enjoyed the same marital status as Israelite wives.
 - iv. Ruth, a Moabitess, severed her relationship with foreign gods and that's why she married Boaz.
 - v. Ezra was motivated by this principle to encourage the men to put away their foreign wives, however, it was not known these women worshipped foreign God's. They were among the faithful exiles who had returned to Jerusalem, so perhaps they were already following Jewish customs as we do not know from the text or history if they were practicing other things.
 - vi. Regardless of the case, it was something done for a reason that wouldn't pertain to us today in the New Covenant.
 - b. Perhaps because of this well-known account, the Corinthians had asked Paul about their concern of being married to an unbeliever.
 - c. In the OT the concern was mixing the Israelites with Canaanites or peoples who were actively worshipping other gods. However, since Jesus destroyed the dividing wall, in the New Covenant that is not of concern. It is one of those things revealed by the Spirit to Paul in 1 Co 7:12-14. The believing spouse sanctifies the unbelieving spouse and the children (seed) are holy.
 - d. Perhaps a principle we can gather from this is not to marry someone who is not a Christian, which we see repeatedly in some verses.
- 6. What about John the Baptizer's chastisement of Herod Antipas new marriage?**
- a. **Matthew 14:3-4 (NIV)** Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, ⁴ for John had been saying to him: **"It is not lawful for you to have her."**
 - b. Was John saying this because he was an adulterer? If that were the case, why not just accuse him of adultery? Why did he say it was not lawful? Referring to the Law of Moses.

- i. I do believe under Jesus' statement in Matthew 19:9 he was probably an adulterer, divorcing his wife to marry another.
 - ii. However, under Jewish Law he was withing his legal rights to divorce and remarry.
 - c. John accuses him of him being a law-keeper. The answer is in verse 3: he took his brother's wife.
 - d. Yes, he divorced to get married to another, that was one problem. This is what Mathew 19:9 is all about, the Jews using the loophole of divorce to get married to another. He was committing adultery and was not penitent about it, but there was another problem as well, according to the law of Moses:
 - e. **Leviticus 18:16 (NIV)** Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother.
 - f. **Leviticus 20:21 (NIV)** If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless.
 - g. This is why John specifically called his marriage unlawful. Under the law Herod could have given his wife a certificate of divorce for any reason and marry another. We know that from Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Herod was not a Christian, as a matter of fact, no one was at that time. Herod was a Jew. He was violating Mosaic Law.
- 7. Isn't any form of divorce sinful and therefore *unscriptural*?**
- a. Divorce, whether by Jesus' disclaimer of fornication or not, is divorce in the eyes of God. It is hated by whatever way it happens, because it violates the covenant made before God.
 - b. Divorce by abandonment by a non-believer (1 Co 7:15) is also divorce that God hates.
 - c. Any divorce is hated.
 - d. To divorce to marry another for any reason other than your spouse abandoned you to marry another is adultery. That would be sinful.
- 8. Isn't any remarriage after divorce sinful and unrecognized by God?**
- a. Marriage is a marriage, by whichever way it happens. It is a covenant promise people make, whether they mean it or not. Some are not able to keep it, and we as Christians have the model of Jesus and the church to keep us striving to keep it when times get tough.
 - b. If marriage was sinful and unrecognized by God, why did the Law allow it?
 - c. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 shows any marriage, whether the 2nd or third, is still a marriage in God's eyes.
 - d. Marrying another person after divorcing for adulterous reasons is a sin that you would need to repent of in order to receive God's favor, just like you would need to do for any other sin you commit.
 - e. The woman at the well had five husbands, so Jesus recognized five marriages.
 - f. In Matthew 19:9 Jesus says, "and marries another", recognizing the marriage, even though it happened sinfully.
 - g. A child out of wedlock is still a child, even though he was born out of sin.
- 9. Is "living in adultery" a biblical spiritual condition?**
- a. **Romans 7:2-3 (NIV)** ...by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. ³ So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is

called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man.

- b. This verse mentions having *sexual relations*, not that the woman was divorced and remarried. Big difference. Under the law if a woman had sexual relations with another man while married she was an adulteress and liable to be stoned to death. The way the Jews got around this adultery was to divorce and then marry another.
- c. If there was a divorce and then a remarriage it was not adultery under the Law (Deut 24:1-4). The adultery occurred if the woman married her original husband after having been married to others.
- d. There is the adulterous woman (woman of whoredom, or promiscuous) as described in Hosea, and then there is a person who may have committed adultery just once and is repentant about it. Both of these are describing the situation in Romans 7:2-3 where no divorce or remarriage has taken place.
- e. People divorcing for any reason (other than because of fornication (a justifiable one in God's sight) to marry another person are committing treason against their marriage vow, thus committing adultery. They are breaking the promise given to each other in God's sight and tearing asunder what God put together. That is the sin, the putting asunder of the original marriage to marry another – the adulteration of the marriage.
 - i. If the marrying was the sin, it would've been called a sin in Deuteronomy 24 as well. God is consistent.
 - ii. The divorcing was not called *adultery* nor the marrying again. It was the divorcing to marry again, the **reason** for the divorcing and the marrying.
 - iii. Of course, if someone just divorces and doesn't intend on marrying, a sin has been committed as well, but they have not committed adultery until they adulterate the original marriage. This is why, as Christians, we are called to not separate from our spouses. If we do, we should remain unmarried or be reconciled to them (1 Co 7:10-11).
- f. If a person is a serial fornicator or abandons the marriage by fornication then there is just cause to divorce, since the marriage has been adulterated. The fornicator who marries another after terminating their current marriage by divorcing, they are committing adultery right then and there. That's what the Jews were doing. They were divorcing to marry another. That's the adultery - in the motive of the divorce.
- g. The law never said adultery was being committed in the 2nd or 3rd marriage. Jesus never said the adultery was being committed in the 2nd marriage.
- h. The opposite is true, those who divorce because they have been abandoned by fornication or otherwise are not adulterers and their marriage are considered to have ended. These parties by definition can remarry since their previous marriage is no more. This follows the principle in 1 Co 7:15. God does not wish us to be in bondage but in peace. A covenant cannot be unilaterally held.
- i. The only way I continue to commit adultery is if I don't repent of that mindset and I'm a serial adulterer, or if I continue to fornicate while married.

10. Shouldn't you live in celibacy after divorce or end up in hell?

- a. God hates divorce, whether you do it because of fornication or not.
- b. You have to examine why you divorced and repent of that mentality to be able to be the kind of spouse that honors God. If not, you will be judged as an adulterer.

- c. Christians should remain unmarried or be reconciled to their spouses if there has been divorce/separation without fornication (1 Co 7:10-11).
- d. Celibacy is a doctrine of demons: 1 Tim 4:1-3

11. Shouldn't the guilty party in a divorce remain unmarried and celibate for the rest of their lives?

- a. There may be no guilty or innocent party in a divorce. If a divorce occurs there are no winners or losers. Both may be equally guilty of ending up in a situation God hates. Both will reap consequences – emotional, mental and spiritual. But they can be forgiven and recover from those and hopefully learn if they are penitent.
- b. I think what people mean by this question is what can the person who was left behind do if their spouse divorces them and marries another? That's where the clause, "except for fornication" (Mat 19:9) comes into play. If someone was left holding the bag, literally, they are in a situation where they cannot continue in a marriage. They can marry another without guilt or sin.
- c. The other person who already married someone and committed adultery, is married already. They are in need of repentance. There is no command for them to divorce and remain celibate. They are married, even if it happened because of sin. If they don't repent God will judge them.
- d. If there has been a divorce and a remarriage, the original marriage has ended, the "guilty" one is already married and there is no reason for the other spouse left behind to live in celibacy unless they decide that.
- e. The only command that approximates that of remaining celibate is if a divorce/separation has occurred without adultery being committed and both are Christians. In that case they are encouraged to remain unmarried or else be reconciled (1 Co 7:10-11).

12. How should an adulterer repent if they want to be baptized?

- a. Some have proposed the adulterer needs to show their repentance by returning to their original spouse.
 - i. What he cannot do, which is what some advocate, is marry his former wife again, since God considers that detestable.
 - ii. **Deuteronomy 24:4 (NIV)** ...her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD.
 - iii. Also, what if his former wife doesn't want him back, or what if she's already married to someone else? Shall we break one marriage to save another? Which marriage is more worthy of honor?
 - iv. Where is this example, command, or inference in scripture?
- b. The adulterer repents the same way they would repent of any other sin: acknowledging the sin and changing the way they think and act about the sin they have committed.
- c. Repentance is focused on **moving forward**, as opposed to changing things that have occurred in the past.
- d. **King David's adultery and murder**
 - i. David committed adultery with Bathsheba – she was married to Uriah when David had sexual relations with her.
 - ii. When Nathan confronts David, he acknowledges the sin and God promptly forgives him (2 Sam 12:13)

- iii. Did David have to keep away from Bathsheba in order to prove his repentance?
- iv. No, the Lord promptly forgave him and blessed him with Solomon by Bathsheba.
- v. Divorcing to get married to another can be forgiven without need to divorce the second spouse.
- e. Definition of repentance
 - i. *metanoēō* – to think differently or afterwards, that is, reconsider. To change one’s mind moving forward. To abhor past sins.
 - ii. **Repentance is not restitution**
 - iii. Restitution: reparation made by giving an equivalent or compensation for loss, damage or injury caused; indemnification.
 - iv. The evidence of true repentance is baptism
 - 1. Renouncement of past sins
 - 2. Change of mind towards future behavior
 - 3. Commitment to follow Jesus
 - v. **Repentance is required for salvation, not restitution.**
 - vi. Obligatory restitution is equivalent to saying “saved by works”.
 - vii. Many sins do not allow for restitution: lying, murder, cursing, abuse, etc.
 - 1. **Galatians 5:19-21 (NIV)** The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.
 - 2. **1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)** Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
 - 3. **Ephesians 4:25-28 (NIV)** Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ **Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer**, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.
 - 4. If you have stolen something, you should return it to show a change of heart, but that should come from your own conscience, not under compulsion. The text says “he must steal no longer.” Moving forward.
 - 5. Some things you steal you are not able to restore, like time, objects you lost or destroyed, ideas, etc. Although the law can monetize these losses in some way and turn it into a dept you are obliged to pay.
- f. The only requirements imposed upon the new gentiles coming into the church were (Acts 15:19-20)
 - i. Abstain from food polluted by idols
 - ii. Abstain from sexual immorality (fornication)
 - iii. From the meat of strangled animals

- iv. From blood
 - v. Why? This meant more to the Jew in the first century than to any one of us, except for sexual immorality.
 - g. The person needs to change their mind about marriage – what led them to divorce before
 - i. If they are married, love their current wife as their only wife in the Lord and give himself up for her, as Jesus does with the church.
 - ii. They have been freed from their judgement as adulterers to freely love their wife!
 - iii. If they are single, they need to follow their conviction
 - h. It is Jesus' Righteousness that justifies us, not Law-keeping
 - i. Restitution or law-keeping cannot gain us righteousness
 - ii. **Galatians 2:21 (NIV)** I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!
 - iii. Grace triumphs over the Law. Mercy triumphs over judgement!
 - iv. Grace redeemed us from the Law so we could serve another freely: Jesus!
 - i. **Acts 26:20 (NIV)** First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.
 - i. The first deed of repentance is to turn to God – synecdoche for baptism
 - ii. Afterwards, their deeds ought to show a change of mind
 - iii. Restitution was not preached before repentance
 - j. **Matthew 3:8 (NIV)** Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. – *John the Baptizer*
 - k. **Things we can be sure of**
 - i. God hates divorce
 - ii. Marriage is unto death
 - iii. Christ saves completely
 - iv. We are a new creation
 - v. We need to repent
 - vi. We need to bear fruit moving forward
 - vii. We will see Jesus' face
13. **Why did God allow polygamy and adultery** (as in the case of Abraham and Sarah, David and Solomon's multiple wives, etc.) without consequence in the Old Testament?
- a. This is why Jesus had told the Pharisees that from the beginning it was always a one-flesh covenant (Matthew 19:4-5), but people, even God's people, have misused and violated that one-flesh covenant.
 - b. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was an example of how divorce was abused. In that kind of culture, marriage is not held in high esteem – it is not honored. It falls on God's people to honor marriage by avoiding fornication and divorce.
 - c. **Acts 17:30 (NIV)** In the past **God overlooked such ignorance**, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.
 - d. Just because God's people practiced something doesn't mean God endorsed it. Jesus is very clear about this concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage.