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May I Divorce and Remarry?

By Ray Stark

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Divorce and Remarriage

Ray Stark

This is a subject that has caused much heartache, spiritual shipwreck and tragic loss of ministry potential. I am not speaking of the heartache of broken homes and broken dreams which are the inevitable results of a failed marriage, but rather the legalistic and unbiblical attitudes which bring lifelong guilt and bondage to many believers as a result of not rightly dividing the New Testament teaching on this subject.

As the church of Jesus Christ our mandate is to set the captives free, not put heavier chains on them and then kick them off the dock and into the deep waters of discouragement and despair. Hopefully the following paper will bring freedom and peace to many who read it.

NOTE: As we study this subject please keep in mind that Jesus was talking to Jews under the Old Covenant and Paul is writing to the Church under the New Covenant. When you take this into account you find no discrepancy between the teachings of Jesus and those of Paul.

JESUS ON DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

"What does Moses (The Law) say?" (Mark. 10:1-12)

Mark 10:1 ¶ And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

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- 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.
- 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.
- 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.
- 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;
- 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.
- 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
- 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.
- 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.
- 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Under the Law Remarriage is Legitimate in Some Cases

Remarriage is permissible under the law when divorce is the result of sexual immorality. (Matt 19:3–9 also see Matt 5:31,32)

Matt 19:3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

- 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,
- 5 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?
- 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
- 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?
- 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.
- 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.
- 10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.
- 11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.
- 12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

NOTE: For believers, sexual infidelity should be grounds for forgiveness and reconciliation, not an excuse for divorce. Moses made his concession because of the hardness of their hearts.

Please keep in mind that Jesus is teaching Jews under the law of Moses in the scriptures quoted above. We need to look at the writings of Paul on the subject in order to find out what the teaching to the church is on the subject of divorce and remarriage.

PAUL'S TEACHING ON DIVORCE

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In 1 Corinthians the seventh chapter Paul give us the New Testament teaching on divorce and remarriage. He is apparently in answering questions the Corinthian church sent to him asking for a definitive doctrinal teaching on the subject.

1 Cor 7:1 ¶ Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.

7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after

this manner, and another after that.

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

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

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

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

Note: In vs 10 Paul emphatically states that what he is about to write concerning the married believers is a direct command from Jesus Christ Himself, "I command, yet not I, but the Lord". He is not going to disagree with Jesus in the following teaching, he is going to deliver the command the Lord gave Him for the church. First he states unequivocally that it is not the will of God for either husband or wife to give up on their marriage and seek divorce.

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Mark 10:9 "What therefore God joined together let not man put asunder"

Paul makes it very clear that Christian couples should expend every effort to make their marriage work

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and even if they divorce they should keep the door open for restoration by avoiding remarriage. It is probably good to note at this point that there is nothing mentioned here about fornication or adultery either as the cause of divorce or as a legitimate reason to reason to remarry. Neither is there any curse mentioned for remarriage.

Paul now moves on to the case of a believer married to an unbeliever. Keep in mind that there were no believers in Corinth before Paul founded the church there so there were probably quite a few instances in which one member of an existing marriage relationship became a believer and their spouse remained unsaved. This is not talking about a believer making the decision to marry an unbeliever as so often happens nowadays. Paul covers that in his "be not unequally yoked" teaching in 1 Cor 6:14.

1 Cor 7:12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

Paul uses the same terminology here as he does speaking of the liberty to remarry without reference to sin that comes after the death of a spouse.

Rom 7: 1 ¶ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

1 Cor 7:39 ¶ 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.

PAUL ON REMARRIAGE

In vs 27 Paul finally gets around to the subject of remarriage after covering the various marriage and divorce scenarios in the church. His definitive command to every believer is "If you are married, don't look for a divorce. If you are divorced, it would be better to remain single but if you remarry you have not sinned."

1 Cor 7:27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

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NOTE: Divorce is an awful thing, and is to be avoided at all cost. It is not however, the unforgivable sin. Nor does divorce and remarriage constitute ongoing adultery. The Blood of Christ cleanses from ALL sin and ALL unrighteousness.

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Pastor Celebration Christian Church <http://www.celebratingjesus.org> 22 years experience in pastoral and missionary ministry.

Who Suffers More In A Divorce?

By Breakup Guide

The name divorce has been a household word for people who need it, or just take it as fashion on self-realization for the never ending illusion for the search of "Miss or Mr. Right" for a mate in life. Even in the confines of the most settled or established homes the word "divorce" hovers as a threat to the solemnity of conjugal partnership because of the environmental changes in trends, culture, ignoring some already practiced social conventions.

To be scared of divorce is no longer accounted in such places as United States, Japan, Korea, and Canada, United Kingdom and the commonwealth. As matter of fact, the rise in the U.S. Canada, United Kingdom and the Commonwealth countries is phenomenal that it becomes more of a fashion in today's society. There are still countries, more strongly attached to their traditional roots and values such as the Philippines and some other Asian countries that merely ignore away any proposition in the legislature to adapt divorce.

These countries though they could perceive the real need of divorce are simply not adept toward the impact of some harsh realities experienced by some people within the conjugal partnership. These people are beset by conditions and problems that can't be resolved and the only way out is to find a legal means to free from each other from the bondage of marriage's brutalities that connect husband and wife who find no solution to their differences. In the Bible, Jesus speaks of "divorce" in exceptional unresolved cases in married life. However, though, conditions in what he wanted to apply in the kind of divorce he taught is rampantly tampered, that of not marrying another again. Still sticking to the spiritual rule "Let no man put asunder."

Impact of divorce to the defunct family (husband, wife, and children), the effects carried about in that marriage (dividing material things acquired, rights covered by the law, such as custody to children, alimony, etc) is tremendous. Legal fights in courts find it so unwholesome to the growing kids. Other children who are growing up psychologically immature are thrown to traumatic state they suffer for the rest of their lives.

Since "divorce" is the dissolution of marriage, once it is approved, marriage became null and void in any circumstances it was presented. The annulment that rendered the partnership void does not

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however carry with it the effects that marriage carry. There are so many conditions that the law impose to protect the psychological, sociological and the emotional health of the each, especially the children, protecting their present and future lives. Allowing separated husband and wife to marry immediately after the divorce are of two different conditions. The man could remarry earlier whereas the woman has to wait for specified days under the circumstance of the law. This is due to the specifications as to the paternity of any child born to the woman after sometime she remarries.

To avoid impending confusion on paternal claim and responsibilities, further extent of time is set for her to remarry that will make definite assurance, the child has not been fathered by the divorced husband. In the presence of confusion because there was conflict in the time of remarriage, the second man should accept or conform to his paternal status to the child, and amenable to full support both moral and material. It passes thru legal process within the scope of duly accepted norm of conduct of the present husband. It may not necessarily undergo formal legal proceedings but what ever the concerned parties had agreed upon privately, may be ratified by the law. This sounds true to the

divorced spouses. Any agreement between them in like manner will also be ratified.

There are two kinds of divorce, the absolute and the limited. Absolute divorce is the judicial terminations of marriage bonds because of grieve misconduct of either one or both parties after the divorce has been processed. It also concerns about other statutory causes arising after the separation. Both the divorced husband and wife become single again.

Limited divorce is merely like a separation decree. It terminates merely the cohabitation of concerned husband and wife. It does not state the dissolution of marriage, and their status is not altered.

(
) is a new resource on breakup
and divorces.

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