

**ESCAPING BONDAGE TO PRESENT-DAY PHARISAISM**  
**"Part VII: Holding To Loyal Love On Marital Relation Issues"**  
**(Matthew 19:3-12)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

The issue of divorce and remarriage deeply affect the Church:

(1) On the one hand, **reputable** men like Spiros Zodhiates, in his **Study Bible**, teach that if a spouse commits adultery, he has just grounds for divorce and remarriage. Zodhiates, as many believe, take Deuteronomy 24:1 and/or Matthew 19:9 to allow for divorce if a partner becomes "unclean," meaning commits adultery. **As a result, a whole school of thought has risen favoring divorce and remarriage:**

(a) Some take 1 Corinthians 7:15 to mean that if an unsaved spouse initiates a divorce against his Christian partner, that believer is free to remarry another party who is a **Christian!**

(b) Some take 1 Corinthians 7:9, 28 to mean that if your choice is "burning" in lust versus remarrying after getting a divorce, it is better to remarry to avoid the temptation of immorality!

(2) However, others hold that divorce is **never** allowed, for **Jesus** said in Luke 16:18: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

(3) Closer to home, Pastor Don Shell at Nepaug Church holds that divorce and remarriage is **not** Biblical. Yet, on one occasion he performed a wedding for a couple he knew had a divorce in their background due to what he calls "mitigating **Biblical** circumstances". Some may view that event to represent a **fudge** or **change** in the Pastor's stand, that he thus thinks divorce must **not** be all **wrong!**

(4) The issue has great ramifications. The Spring, 1998 issue of Washington Bible College's, Tidings has an article on page 2 by President Homer Heater on the **fallout** of eroding marital standards. He laments that ". . . a disturbing development (to name just one) is the number of Christian leaders who are falling into sexual sin and continuing to minister as though there were no problem. I know of pastors who remain in their church ministry even though separated from their wives. The level of tolerance for immorality has increased, which is why we are hearing such statements as 'everyone does it.'"

**Well, in view of all of the QUESTIONS and CONCERNS these issues raise, what is the correct view, and WHY?! What does God want us to do AFTER we have been divorced and remarried?**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . . )

***Need:*** "Why do Christians differ on the sensitive issue of divorce and remarriage, what is the Biblical view, and what does God expect from me if I have been divorced and/or remarried?!"

- I. **God's RIGHTEOUSNESS demands that we LOYALLY LOVE our spouse, so God made marriage to be a PERMANENT union.**
  - A. God's righteousness calls for us to **love** one another, Mtt. 22:35-40.
  - B. Applied to **marriage**, God meant us to be **loyal** in **marital love**:
    1. Genesis 2:21-24 reports how God made spouses from **one flesh**.
    2. Thus, **divorce** is **destructive disloyalty**, Mk. 10:11b; Mal. 2:13-16.
- II. **Yet, the Pharisees and many Christians today have ABANDONED this LOYALTY, teaching MOSES taught divorce for adultery!**
  - A. The Pharisees felt Moses in Deut. 24:1 **ordered** one get divorced when he found "uncleanness" in his spouse, Mtt. 19:7. One group (Hillel) said "uncleanness" meant many things where conservatives (Shammai) said it was adultery only, Ryr. St. Bib., KJV, ftn., Mtt. 19:3
  - B. Thus, the Pharisees said Moses condoned **divorce** and **remarriage at least** for **adultery!** Yet, **Jesus** said such a **reaction** to a spouse's sin is just as **adulterous** as the original sin of the immoral spouse, Lk. 16:18.
  - C. Besides, there was a test for adultery in Num. 5:11-31, and finding one guilty with it meant **death, not divorce** (Dt. 22:22), so Moses could **not** have meant "adultery" by the Dt. 24:1 "uncleanness" term!
  - D. Yet, many **today** heed this same errant **Shammai Pharisee** view of Deut. 24:1 to promote the same errant stand for divorce & remarriage!
- III. **Jesus defended Moses' WILL that couples STAY LOYALLY wed:**
  - A. When the Pharisees claimed Moses **ordered** divorce in Dt. 24:1, Jesus **defended** Moses, saying he **reluctantly put up** with it due to Israel's **hard hearts**, so it was **not** Moses' will to condone divorce, Mtt. 19:7f:
    1. The first verb of Deut. 24:1 ("marries"), being **imperfect** in tense and followed by a **string** of **perfect** tense verbs, each joined to a **waw** (ו) **until** you get to the **imperfect** verb beginning in verse 4 ("not allowed to marry") shows the "if-clause" extends through to the **end** of Deut. 24, verse **three**, [cf. the NIV; Kittel, ed., Biblia Hebraica, p. 299 with G.K.C., Gesenius' Hebr. Gram., p. 133].
    2. Thus, **without condoning** divorce, **Moses wrote that if multiple divorces occurred, original couples could not remarry!**
    3. **So, Moses actually tried to put the brakes on rampant divorce!**
  - B. Jesus went on to say that divorce and remarriage is **adultery "except for fornication (porneia)"** Mtt. 19:9 KJV. We now view this **clause**:

1. Jesus could **not** have meant adultery by this *clause* or (a) He would have **contradicted** His stand on fidelity in Mtt. 19:6, (b) He would have **entrapped** Himself by thus taking the Shammai view, v. 3 and (c) He would have opposed Moses' Dt. 22:22 order that adultery result in **death, not divorce!** (d) Also, Mark **and** Luke *omit* the *clause*, so were Jesus to have meant adultery by it, **either** Matthew **erred** for *contradicting* himself at v. 6b by including the *clause*, or Mark **and** Luke **lied** by omitting it to avoid a blatant contradiction!
2. The problem is solved by noting the **Jews** meant "*porneia*" to be any of 3 possible states **unique** to **Judaism** that **required** a divorce: (a) immorality during **Jewish** betrothal, Mtt. 1:18-19; (b) union of Jew and Gentile in violation of the **Law** (Ez. 9-10) and (c) union of relatives in violation of the **Law**, Lev. 18, Hendricks, Chr. Couns. for Cont. Probs., p. 112f. Matthew **had** to **include** the "exception" clause or be seen as failing **Hebrew** culture and Law to his **Hebrew** readers, and Luke & Mark **had** to **exclude** it or seem contradictory to their **Gentile** readers who saw "*porneia*" as **general adultery!**
3. Thus, the clause applies **only** to 1st cent. **Jews!** **We must ignore it!**

IV. **We thus handle other passages to defend marital loyal love:**

- A. In 1 Cor. 7:9, 28, permitting people to marry and not "burn" does **not** allow **divorced** people, but **virgins** to marry, cf. 1 Cor. 7:2 and 7:25a.
- B. The "not under bondage" clause of 1 Cor. 7:15 only permits one to let the unsaved spouse leave in hope of **later reconciliation**, 7:16, 11.

V. **We ALSO handle "all-wrong" states to guard loyal love via mercy:**

- A. If parties **come to Christ** while in a **common law** union **long after a divorce**, and **children** are **involved**, one has **no option but technically to violate Scripture**: he either (a) promotes **immorality** by **staying** unwed, (b) or wrecks innocent **familial** relations to get back with the **1st** spouse versus God's **original intent** for human loyal love (c) or he commits **adultery** by remarrying. (This is the case the pastor faced!)
- B. Mtt. 12:1-7 **teaches** us to react to such "**ALL-wrong**" cases by doing what **best** shows **mercy**. I saw **remarriage** as the "**best**" **wrong** choice!
- C. **However, were** there a **sinless** option **besides wrong** remarriage, one should **not** favor remarriage or be guilty of a hard heart, Mtt. 19:8!

VI. **If wrongly divorced and remarried, we are cleansed by trusting in Christ (Jn. 3:16) or by confession (if sinning while saved), 1 Jn. 1:9.**

***Lesson Application:*** *God wants us to live ABOVE the righteousness of the Pharisees by preserving LOYAL LOVE in ALL marital issues. If we have failed, we find God's forgiveness in Christ, and go on!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

(1) The April 6, 1997 issue of the Republican-American has syndicated columnist, Tony Snow reporting on Dr. David B. Larson's study. Larson, the president of the National Institute of Healthcare Research studied the relation of health to marital and religious states. He grew up in a broken home, and approaches the subject of faith and family with a "special passion". Larson's findings on the subject are:

- (a) Divorced men enter psychiatric hospitals 21 times more often than their married counterparts.
- (b) They are twice as likely to die of heart disease, four times as likely to get pneumonia and seven times as likely to die from suicide than their married counterparts.
- (c) Men who break their vows have greater job problems, stress-related disease and stay in prison more.
- (d) Divorced men treat their children worse, and can expect to live 10 years less than were they to have stayed married.
- (e) Ex-wives have significantly higher death rates from infectious diseases, illnesses, respiratory disorders and parasites.
- (f) They miss work 50 % more than their married colleagues due to injury and illness, and live 5 years less.
- (g) Divorced partners of both genders turn alcoholic and use illicit drugs five times as often as their married counterparts.
- (h) Children of divorced parents do worse in school, spend more time behind bars, die earlier, earn less, receive welfare more often and inherit the tendency for divorce more than their counterparts.
- (i) According to figures collected coast to coast by respected physicians and social scientists, if you pray and stay married, you will live longer, earn more income, weigh less, make less trouble and enjoy markedly higher self-esteem.

(2) Dr. Homer Heater of Washington Bible College, summarizing his concerns on lax views on marital standards among Christians, writes (Ibid., Tidings, p. 2): "I am convinced that the Church needs to reestablish, preach and publish the standards of morality God expects of His children . . . God's standard for all of us is clear: 'But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do' (1 Peter 1:15)."

**God is calling us to HOLINESS, separation from sin in all issues of marital fidelity!**