

# THE TRUTH ABOUT DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

By Marie Casale  
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As Christians we are expected to '*earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, for certain men crept in unawares*'. (Jde 1:3-4) These men, while still professing the name of Christ, changed the doctrines of Christ over time so that the Christian religion today bears little resemblance to that of the early disciples in many ways. Just one would be that whereas Jesus and his followers kept the seventh day Sabbath and the Biblical holy days of Leviticus 23, most Christians today keep Sunday, Christmas and Easter. Many Christian doctrines today are a close counterfeit of the true teachings of Christ - enough of a counterfeit to deceive the many who do not study and prove all things, but simply accept the authority and traditions of men.

In modern times, the Worldwide Church of God under Mr. Herbert Armstrong began to teach and follow the original faith of Jesus and his disciples and many truths were restored. This church kept the Sabbath, the Biblical Holy days and other true doctrines according to the example and teachings of our Lord.

When Mr. Armstrong died, in 1986 Mr. Joseph Tkach became the Pastor General. Little by little he changed Worldwide's doctrines to reflect Protestant Evangelical theology until even the name of the church was changed in 2009 to Grace Communion International. [Ref 1]

As doctrines were changed, more and more members wishing to be faithful to Herbert Armstrong's original teachings left the church. United Church of God members, for example, left in 1995 when Mr. Tkach began teaching that the Sabbath and Holy Days were no longer necessary to keep.

Thinking that they had escaped a great apostasy and preserved the true faith, many of the split-off churches of God failed to notice that the doctrine of divorce and remarriage had already been changed by Herbert Armstrong himself in 1974 to reflect the Protestant Evangelical theology. So they unknowingly took the Protestant doctrine of divorce and remarriage with them when they split-off. Thus today, the doctrine of divorce and remarriage in most of the split-off churches of God is the very same doctrine that Grace Communion International teaches.

## 1.

### **HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE FROM THE FIRST CENTURY.**

As already mentioned, over time doctrines were changed in the early church, some sooner, some later. The doctrine of divorce and remarriage was one that was changed later, for in the first five centuries after Christ, all of the Greek and Latin writers except one interpreted the Biblical texts to mean that divorce may take place only for fornication (*porneia*), and remarriage after divorce is committing adultery. In addition to naming these writers, the author of this reference: [Ref 2] gives a brief summary of their teachings. In all there were 25 individual writers and two Christian councils that forbade remarriage after divorce. Their interpretation of the Biblical divorce texts remained the standard in the church in the west.

The Protestant view of allowing remarriage began with Erasmus in 1519. [Ref 3] He appealed more to human reasoning than scripture to support his teaching. He thought that love must sometimes come before law and it is unloving to make a couple remain in an unhappy marriage or for an innocent spouse to have to remain celibate for the rest of his life. This reference: [Ref 4] shows how the divorce remarriage doctrine was changed by Erasmus. His view was subsequently adopted by many of the Protestant reformers and later enshrined in the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1648. [Ref 5]

*5. Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract.a In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce,b and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.c*

*a. Mat 1:18-20. • b. Mat 5:31-32. • c. Mat 19:9; Rom 7:2-3.*

*6. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments, unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage;a wherein a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it, not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.b*

*a. Mat 19:6, 8-9; 1 Cor 7:15. • b. Deut 24:1-4.*

## 2.

### **HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD**

Mr. Herbert Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God originally taught that:

\*Divorce (annulment) and remarriage is allowed only for fornication before marriage without the knowledge of a spouse. The divorce must take place as soon as the fraud is discovered.

Otherwise the marriage is bound.

\*Any divorce or remarriage after marriage is forbidden (including remarriages before baptism) because marriage is binding until death.

[Ref 6] [Ref 7]

This reference explains the turmoil in the Worldwide Church of God leading up to the doctrinal change that took place in 1974:

[Ref 8]

Mr. Herbert Armstrong changed the doctrine of divorce and remarriage in 1974:

\*Divorce (annulment) and remarriage is still allowed for fornication committed before marriage without the knowledge of a spouse. The divorce must take place as soon as the fraud is discovered. Otherwise the marriage is bound.

\*Marriages in the world are not bound by God, only marriages in the church.

\*If an unconverted spouse leaves the converted one, since the unconverted marriage was never bound by God, the converted one is allowed to divorce and remarry in the church.

\*If one spouse falls away from the church and becomes an unbeliever, the other spouse in the church may divorce and remarry.

\*One who has been married and divorced prior to baptism may remarry in the church.

[Ref 9] [Ref 10]

The door continued to open allowing divorce and remarriage in Worldwide after 1974 and in 1977 Mr. Armstrong himself married a divorced woman against the commandment of the Lord in Matthew 5:32.

[Ref 11]

Mr. Armstrong died in 1986 and Mr. Joseph Tkach took over as Pastor General. He began to systematically change the doctrines of Worldwide to reflect Protestant theology and in 2009 the name of the church was changed to Grace Communion International.

Grace Communion International gives permission for divorce and remarriage for:

\*Adultery

\*Emotional and Physical neglect

\*Abuse and abandonment

\*A newly converted person is free to remarry if previously divorced.

\*Those who have been 'loosed' or 'divorced' from an unbelieving mate do not sin if they remarry.

\*If A husband does not provide for his wife, divorce is allowed.

[Ref 12] [Ref 13]

United Church of God split off from Worldwide in 1995 because of doctrinal changes forced by Mr. Tkach.

United gives permission for divorce and remarriage for:

\*A marriage based on fraud or deception can be annulled and remarriage is allowed.

\*Any type of sexual immorality.

\*An unbeliever not pleased to dwell with a believer and departs or makes life miserable for the believer but does not depart.

\*Baptism provides a fresh start, so if a person is single because of divorce before baptism it is not sin to remarry.

\*A newly converted person is accepted in their current marriage even if it is not the first marriage.

[Ref 14]

As we see from examining these documents, the original teachings of the Worldwide Church of God contained an error about the definition of the word fornication (porneia), but by forbidding divorce and remarriage it more closely resembled the doctrine of the first five centuries. The change in 1974 and subsequent church teachings reflect those of the Protestant Reformation that gives permission to remarry.

If we are going to restore the faith once delivered to the saints, we must put aside any preconceived ideas and ask:

### WHAT DID JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES TEACH ABOUT DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE?

Did they teach the doctrine of the first five centuries, or the doctrine of the Protestant reformation? Or did they teach neither or a combination of the two? Can we know from the scriptures?

Now that we have looked at the historical evidence, let's look at the scriptural evidence.

Protestant theology interprets these scriptures, Deut 24:1-4, Mat 19:9, 1Cor 7:15, 1Cor 7:27-28 as allowing divorce and remarriage. It then goes further and reasons that since there were exceptions made here, other exceptions and allowances can be made on an individual basis until the actual practice today closely resembles the Pharisaical doctrine of divorce for any cause with subsequent remarriage. This paper closely examines each of the scriptures that are interpreted as permitting divorce and remarriage.

In doing so we must remember two rules for Bible study. The first rule is that ALL the relevant scriptures must be brought out. This is from Isaiah 28:10-13 that says the truth is found here a little and there a little. The scriptures then must be put together properly. (2Tim 2:15, 2Pet 3:16) It is easy to draw conclusions based on human reasoning or taking things out of context or assuming something that has not clearly been said, but we must examine every conclusion to make sure that it does not contradict other scriptures. The scriptures are the mind of God and they do not contradict themselves.

### 3.

#### **DOES MATTHEW 19:9 GIVE PERMISSION FOR DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE?**

*Mat 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?*

*Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,*

*Mat 19:5 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?*

*Mat 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

*Mat 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?*

*Mat 19:8 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.*

*Mat 19:9 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.*

Many assume that Matthew 19:9 gives permission for divorce and remarriage. Putting away (divorce) is clearly allowed in this scripture for the spouse's fornication (porneia). Other scriptures agree with allowing divorce for fornication. For example, Jesus' teaching in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5:32 and the Lord's example of putting away his wife Israel for fornication in Jeremiah 3.

*\*Mat 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:*

*Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery:*

*\*Jer 3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

It has been taught that since the words fornication (porneia) and adultery (moicheuo) are both used in Matthew 19:9, then the word fornication must mean only sex before marriage. It cannot

mean adultery committed within marriage. If this were true, then the Lord would not have divorced Israel for adultery in Jeremiah 3:8 after he was married to her. The word adultery means sex with another instead of one's spouse as well as the other definitions Jesus added to it, i.e. marriage to a divorced woman (Mat 5:32) and remarriage (Mar 10:11-12) etc. But the word fornication can mean any kind of sexual misconduct wherein one becomes one flesh with the partner including adultery.

So Matthew 19:9 permits divorce for fornication (porneia) meaning all kinds of sexual misconduct. The question for Matthew 19:9 is whether remarriage is allowed after the divorce. There is a great deal of scriptural evidence showing that remarriage is NOT ALLOWED.

### 3A.

#### **EVIDENCE 1 FOR NO REMARRIAGE THE LORD'S EXAMPLE IN JEREMIAH 3**

Many do not use Jeremiah 3 in their papers on divorce and remarriage because they say it is only a metaphor. But they are leaving out a significant scripture that gives a clear example of NO remarriage. In Jeremiah 3 the Lord himself was in the position of the innocent husband in Matthew 19:9. Israel, his wife, was committing gross immorality, so the Lord gave her a bill of divorcement (he obeyed the law of Moses commanding to give her one) and sent her away. (verse 8) What is significant is that after he sent her away, he did not (taking advantage of the assumed permission of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 or Matthew 19:9) get remarried to another nation. Furthermore, his view of the bill of divorcement was that it did not completely dissolve his marriage bond, for he said in verse 14 AFTER he had divorced Israel in verse 8, "*I am (present tense) married unto you!*".

*Jer 3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

*Jer 3:9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.*

*Jer 3:10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.*

*Jer 3:11 And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.*

*Jer 3:12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever.*

*Jer 3:13 Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord.*

*Jer 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:*

*Jer 3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

Then he tried to get Israel to repent and return to him. (Verses 13-14) Since the Lord said that he and Israel were still married after the divorce, and he also tried to get her to repent and return, then his view of the divorce was that it was only a temporary separation until Israel should repent and return. The fact that he sought repentance and return shows that his heart was far from any

thought of remarriage. He had an attitude of being willing to love his enemies, to forgive them and reconcile.

This passage in Isaiah written after he had sent Israel away also shows how the Lord views the permanence of his covenant with Israel:

*Isa 54:5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.*

*Isa 54:6 For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.*

*Isa 54:7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.*

*Isa 54:8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.*

*Isa 54:9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.*

*Isa 54:10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.*

These scriptures show that the Lord not only wished to reconcile, but he later died on the cross to pay for Israel's sins. His plan is to make a new and better covenant, not only with the New Testament Church, (Heb 12:22-24) but also with the House of Israel and Judah. (Heb 8:7-12) Romans 11:26-27 shows that the Lord not only made a marriage covenant with Israel, but also a covenant to take away their sins.

*\*Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,*

*Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

*Heb 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

*\*Heb 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.*

*Heb 8:8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:*

*Heb 8:9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.*

*Heb 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:*

*Heb 8:11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*

*Heb 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

*\*Rom 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*

*Rom 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

### 3B.

#### EVIDENCE 2 FOR NO REMARRIAGE THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

As discussed in Section 1, in the first five centuries after Christ, all of the Greek and Latin writers except one interpreted the Biblical texts to mean that divorce may take place only for fornication (*porneia*), and remarriage after divorce for any reason is committing adultery. In all there were 25 individual writers and two Christian councils that forbade remarriage after divorce.

The earliest Christian teaching on divorce and remarriage, written well within a century of the Gospels themselves, is found in *The Shepherd of Hermas*. [Ref 15] Some favor the date of this work as being at the end of the first century, others about 140-50. Hermas' treatment of divorce and remarriage witnesses to a practice in the church characteristic of the whole period before the Council of Nicaea in 325.

In the following, Hermas represents himself as questioning his heavenly guardian about what a man should do if he learns that his wife is guilty of adultery and persists in it. This places the man in the position of the innocent husband in Matthew 19:9

##### Mandate 4

1[29]:4 I say to him, "Sir, permit me to ask thee a few more questions" "Say on," saith he. "Sir," say I, "if a man who has a wife that is faithful in the Lord detect her in adultery, (*en moicheia tini*) doth the husband sin in living with her?"

1[29]:5 "So long as he is ignorant," saith he, "he sinneth not; but if the husband know of her sin, and the wife repent not, but continue in her fornication, (*epmenē tē porneia autēs*) and her husband live with her, he makes himself responsible for her sin and an accomplice in her adultery." (*koinōnos tēs moicheias autēs*)

1[29]:6 "What then, Sir," say I, "shall the husband do, if the wife continue in this case?" (*epimeinē tō pathei toutō*) "Let him divorce her," (*Apolysatō autēn*), saith he, "and let the husband abide alone: (*eph' heautō menetō*). but if after divorcing his wife he shall marry another, he likewise committeth adultery."

1[29]:7 "If then, Sir," say I, "after the wife is divorced, she repent and desire to return to her own husband, shall she not be received?"

1[29]:8 "Certainly," saith he, "if the husband receiveth her not, he sinneth and bringeth great sin upon himself; nay, one who hath sinned and repented must (*dei*) be received, yet not often; for there is but one repentance for the servants of God. For the sake of her repentance therefore the husband ought not (*ouk apheilei*) to marry. This is the manner of acting (*hē praxis*) enjoined on husband and wife.

1[29]:9 Not only," saith he, "is it adultery, if a man pollute his flesh, but whosoever doeth things like unto the heathen committeth adultery. If therefore in such deeds as these likewise a man continue and repent not, keep away from him, and live not with him. Otherwise, thou also art a partaker of his sin.

1[29]:10 For this cause ye were enjoined to remain single, whether husband or wife; for in such cases repentance is possible.

Summary: This summary shows how Hermas' writings agree with the scriptures.

1. A husband may not go on living with a wife he knows to be adulterous, but he must put her away.

Although the scriptures do not state that an adulterous wife **MUST** be put away, they do agree with this rule by saying in 1Corinthians 6:15-19 that a Christian must not have sexual relations with a harlot for to do so defiles his body which is the temple of the Lord.

*1Cor 6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

*1Cor 6:16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

*1Cor 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*

*1Cor 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

*1Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

The Lord also set the example in Jeremiah 3 of divorcing his wife Israel for her adultery.

2A. The husband must remain single. To remarry would be to commit adultery himself. This shows that the understanding of Matthew 19:9 in the early church was to not permit remarriage but to call it adultery

2B. Also by not remarrying, the door is left open for repentance.

This also agrees with the example of the Lord in Jeremiah 3 who did not remarry after his divorce, but urged Israel to repent.

3. If the adulterous wife repents and returns to her husband, he must take her back.

This agrees with the example of the Lord in Jeremiah 3 who offered to take Israel back.

*Jer 3:1 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord.*

It also agrees with the principle of forgiveness that we must be willing to forgive just as the Lord was willing to forgive us.

*Mat 6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

This scripture tells us that the Lord's example is perfect and we ought to follow his example. This would include his example in Jeremiah 3.

*Luk 6:40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.*

4. The same principles apply in the case of an innocent wife with a guilty husband.

This agrees with the scriptures

*\*Mar 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.*

*Mar 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

*\*1Cor 7:3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

*1Co 7:4 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.*



It might be assumed that the first point was practiced because it was in agreement with the *Lex Julia de adulteriis* which stated that a husband must, within sixty days, send away a wife guilty of adultery. In Roman Law, a husband who kept an adulterous wife was guilty of *lenocinium*, or connivance in the wife's adultery. But points 2 and 3 of forbidding remarriage and making it a duty to receive back a repentant wife were in direct opposition to the civil law of Rome which forbade remarriage only to the adulterous wife and did not make it a duty to receive back a repentant wife. Also point 4 that the same principles apply to both husband and wife was not so in Roman law. Thus we can be confident that these last three points were influenced by the early Christian ethic of marriage and divorce, not by the laws of the society.

### **3C.**

#### **EVIDENCE 3 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

##### **THE GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF MATTHEW 19:9**

*Mat 19:9 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.*

The problem with Matthew 19:9 is that because of the sentence structure, it is unclear which clause the prepositional phrase [*except porneia*] modifies. The clause [*whosoever shall divorce his wife*] contains the verb divorce and comes before the phrase [*except porneia*] and the clause [*and shall marry another*] contains the verb marry and comes AFTER the exception. This makes it grammatically unclear which verb [*except porneia*] modifies. Those who want to say that remarriage is allowed for porneia say the exception modifies both verbs. If the sentence read, [*whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another commits adultery except it be for fornication*], then we would KNOW that both the putting away and the remarriage are permitted for fornication and the remarriage does not amount to adultery. The way it is written, permission for remarriage is an ASSUMPTION because normally prepositional phrases are adverbial and qualify the verb which they follow. [Ref 16]

The Greek sentence structure of Matthew 19:9 is most accurately called a double conditional clause. It basically indicates that we are dealing with two conditional statements, one that is qualified and one that is unqualified or absolute.

1. A man may not put away his wife unless she is guilty of adultery.
2. Whoever marries another after putting away his wife commits adultery.

The first part of the conditional statement answered the Pharisees' question, "may a man divorce for any cause?" The answer was that permission was reduced to one cause - fornication. The second part addressed the Pharisees' belief that Moses permitted remarriage. His answer was that remarriage after divorce is adultery. [Ref 17]

This understanding of the grammatical structure of Matthew 19:9 agrees with the Lord's divorce and remarriage example in Jeremiah 3. It is also in harmony with all the other scriptures on divorce and remarriage. The early writers of the first five centuries who knew Greek would have understood this grammatical structure and therefore did not interpret the verse as allowing remarriage.

### **3D.**

#### **EVIDENCE 4 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

##### **JESUS REFERS BACK TO THE FIRST MARRIAGE IN GENESIS**

*\*Mat 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?*

*Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,*

*Mat 19:5 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?*

*Mat 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

*Mat 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?*

*Mat 19:8 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.*

*\*Gen 2:23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

*Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

Many assume that Jesus as a first-century Jew must have accepted the common view that there were circumstances in which divorce followed by remarriage was justified. Indeed, if Matthew 19:9 does allow remarriage, then when the Jews confronted Jesus with the question, 'Is divorce allowed for every cause, then he must have sided with the Rabbinic School of Shammai that allowed divorce only for serious sexual sins and also allowed remarriage afterwards. But by ruling out remarriage entirely, and only permitting divorce (meaning temporary separation to allow repentance) for fornication (porneia) Jesus showed that his views were quite different from both Pharisaic schools. The way Jesus answered the Pharisees' question was to reject the common views and restore the purpose of God concerning marriage in the beginning that it should be monogamous and life-long. Four key statements make up his answer.

1. From the beginning it (divorce) was not so

This statement completely disallows the divorce for every cause that Moses allowed for the hardness of their hearts. And if divorce was not so, then remarriage was not so either.

2. Wherefore they are no more two but one flesh.

The example of the Lord's marriage to Israel in Jeremiah 3 (Evidence 1), that even gross immorality and divorce did not completely dissolve his marriage supports what Jesus said here about human marriage, that they are no more two but one flesh.

3. What God has joined, let not man put asunder

This means what it says. Do not let or allow men to put asunder what God has joined. In other words, do not let or allow divorce except what the Lord himself permitted for fornication. To do so is unlawful divorce and is therefore a sin.

4. Because of the hardness of your hearts.

The following scriptures give us an idea of what hardness of heart is:

Hardness of heart has to do with unbelief in what Jesus did or said, and as we know, without faith it is impossible to please God.

*\*Mar 16:14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*

Hardness of heart here is coupled with impenitent or unrepentant heart and will lead us to the wrath of God. It is a heart that has no repentance.

*\*Rom 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

Here, hardness of heart is opposite to having the fear of the Lord.

*\*Pro 28:14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.*

Here, the Lord said that the house of Israel would not listen to a prophet any more than they will listen to the Lord himself because they are hardhearted.

*\*Eze 3:7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.*

Considering these scriptures, is hardness of heart something we want to cultivate in the Church of God by allowing divorce for reasons other than fornication?

### **3E.**

#### **EVIDENCE 5 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

#### **THE CELIBACY SCRIPTURES OF MATTHEW 19:10-12**

*Mat 19:9 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*

*Mat 19:10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.*

*Mat 19:11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.*

*Mat 19:12 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.*

What do the celibacy scriptures mean here?

Jesus' hard teaching in verse 9 that:

1. putting away (meaning separation) is allowed only for porneia
2. any remarriage afterwards is adultery
3. any marriage to a divorced person is committing adultery

caused the disciples' astonished response in verse 10. "If the case be so with his wife, it is not good to marry!" If Jesus had permitted remarriage, there would be no such outcry from the disciples.

Verse 12 should not be read as a call to celibacy (He that can receive the celibate life, let him receive it), for the celibacy scripture (verse 12) is not a whole different subject, but must refer back to the astonishment of the disciples over Jesus' hard teaching. Therefore what Jesus was saying was that all men (meaning the Pharisees and the world) cannot accept this hard teaching of Matthew 19:9. But those to whom it is given (meaning the disciples) can accept it. This is similar to what he said in Matthew 13:11

*Mat 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.\*

Verse 12 then describes the state of a man whose wife has been put away for porneia. He may not remarry, so in a sense he is like others who do not marry, those born eunuchs and those made eunuchs by men. In this case he is a eunuch who becomes one for the Kingdom of God's sake because he is willing to obey the hard saying of Jesus and not remarry in order to attain to the Kingdom of God.

The words, 'he that is able to receive it, let him receive it' also should not be understood as if Jesus made a concession to the disciples, (not everyone can accept this hard teaching, so it's OK if they don't). Concession is not Jesus' style. Rather, it refers back to verse 11. Those who cannot receive this hard saying are the Pharisees and the world while those who are able to receive it are the true disciples of the Lord.

### **3F.**

#### **EVIDENCE 6 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

#### **OTHER SCRIPTURES THAT CONFIRM NO REMARRIAGE**

There are other scriptures that confirm no remarriage is permitted.

Romans 7:1-3 confirms that we may not remarry by saying that marriage is like the law that has dominion over men as long as they live. It is binding until death, not just until a divorce.

*\*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?*

*Rom 7:2 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.*

*Rom 7:3 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.*

These scriptures to the Romans are verified by Paul's instruction to the Church at Corinth:

*1Cor 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.*

Luke also confirms that no remarriage is permitted.

*Luk 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.*

### **3G.**

#### **EVIDENCE 7 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

#### **MARK 10:2-12**

Mark 10:2-12 is the parallel account of Matthew 19:3-9. Mark adds to the Pharisees' conversation with Jesus that the disciples spoke to him in private of the same matter after he had spoken to the Pharisees and Jesus told them plainly that no remarriage is allowed.

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

*Mar 10:3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?*

*Mar 10:4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.*

*Mar 10:5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.*

*Mar 10:6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.*

*Mar 10:7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;*

*Mar 10:8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.*

*Mar 10:9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

*Mar 10:10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.*

*Mar 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.*

*Mar 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

### **3H.**

#### **EVIDENCE 8 FOR NO REMARRIAGE THE MARRIAGE VOW AND COVENANT**

Another most important reason no remarriage is allowed is found in Numbers 30. Here is a whole chapter devoted to the making of vows and keeping the words that come out of your mouth. Your marriage began with a vow before witnesses to take this person as your spouse for better or worse until death.

*Num 30:2 If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*

How important is it to keep your vows? In Psalms 15 the Lord answers the question as to who shall dwell in his holy hill:

*Psa 15:1 [[A Psalm of David.]] Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?...*

*Psa 15:4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*

And not only a vow, but the Lord regards marriage as a covenant, a binding agreement.

*Eze 16:8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.*

Romans 1 gives us a list of evils that will bring upon us the wrath of God. One of those evils is being a covenant breaker which you can be guilty of if you break your marriage covenant through unlawful divorce and remarriage.

*Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

*Rom 1:31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:*

Thus, if we adopt the Lord's example and view of divorce, that it is only a temporary separation with no remarriage until repentance and reconciliation can be achieved, then there is no breaking of the vow or the covenant of marriage.

### **3I.**

#### **EVIDENCE 9 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

## **THE CLAIM OF THE INNOCENT HUSBAND IN MATTHEW 19:9**

One compelling argument to allow remarriage is that the husband in Matthew 19:9 has been wronged by his adulterous wife. He is the innocent party. Why should he be condemned to a life of celibacy when she is the one who sinned?

Compare Matthew 5:32 with Matthew 19:9.

*\*Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery:*

*\*Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication and shall marry another, committeth adultery*

In Matthew 5:32 a husband who puts away his wife for reasons other than fornication, causes her to commit adultery. Here she is the innocent party who is being wrongly divorced, but if she remarries, she is committing adultery. In Matthew 19:9 a husband who has an adulterous wife divorces her and he is the innocent party. But it is assumed that Matthew 19:9 gives him permission to remarry. Why would he, the innocent party of Matthew 19:9 have permission to remarry, but if his wife is the innocent party in Matthew 5:32 and she remarries, she is committing adultery? The following scriptures show that God does not have a double standard concerning marriage:

*Mar 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.*

*Mar 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

### **3J.**

#### **EVIDENCE 10 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

#### **MATTHEW 19:9 NOT MARRYING A DIVORCED PERSON**

The part of Matthew 19:9 against marrying a divorced person is evidence that no remarriage is allowed.

*Mat 19:9 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.*

Let's say you divorce your wife for fornication. You are innocent, so you think you can remarry. But since you are just as much a divorced person as your wife now is, whoever marries you is marrying a divorced person and so is committing adultery.

### **4.**

#### **DOES DEUTERONOMY 24:1-4 PERMIT REMARRIAGE?**

When the Pharisees in Matthew 19:3 asked Jesus if divorce was allowed for any reason, they were referring to Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and their interpretation of it. In Jesus' time there were two schools of thought on the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The Rabbinical School of Hillel said divorce could take place for any cause. The Rabbinical School of Shammai said divorce was permitted only for sexual immorality. Both schools said that remarriage was permitted.

Even though Jesus' response to the Pharisees was to say that Moses only allowed divorce for the hardness of their hearts, but the purpose of marriage when God joined Adam and Eve was that it should be monogamous and life long, people still reason that Genesis was the ideal, but men who

cannot achieve the ideal still need divorce and remarriage. So many continue to use Deuteronomy 24:1-4 to permit divorce and remarriage.

Let's examine Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and we will see that these scriptures do not actually give permission to remarry as the Jews assumed they did.

*Deu 24:1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.*

*Deu 24:2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.*

*Deu 24:3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;*

*Deu 24:4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

Examine verse 2. Does this mean that the woman has permission to go and be another man's wife or does it mean that she may decide on her own to go and be another man's wife? If you look up several different translations of this verse, the latter is the rendering of some of them. That she decides on her own to marry another would seem to be the true meaning here because verse 24 says that her former husband may not take her back after she has been 'defiled'. If she had God's permission to remarry, she would not be defiled by doing so. The fact that she has been defiled by becoming another man's wife actually agrees with what Jesus said here:

*Mat 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:*

*Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery:*

So the truth about Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is that it does give permission to divorce for 'some uncleanness'. Jesus nullified this in Matthew 19:8 when he said that the permission to divorce was given for the hardness of hearts, but from the beginning it was not so. These scriptures do not give permission for remarriage, for if the wife wants to remain undefiled after her husband divorces her she cannot remarry.

## 5.

### **DOES 1CORINTHIANS 7:15 GIVE PERMISSION (PAULINE PRIVILEGE) FOR THE NEWLY BAPTIZED, IF THEIR UNCONVERTED SPOUSE DEPARTS, TO DIVORCE AND REMARRY IN THE CHURCH?**

*1Cor 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.*

*1Cor 7:13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.*

*1Cor 7:14 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.*

*1Cor 7:15 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.*

*1Cor 7:16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?*

## **5A.**

### **HISTORY OF 1CORINTHIANS 7:15 ALLOWING DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

The history of allowing divorce and remarriage for an unconverted spouse departing can be found in this reference: [Ref 18] (I have researched and added the dates)

*"The prevailing view enunciated by Augustine (354-430) was that Christian spouses of unbelievers whether they were Christians at the time of the marriage or subsequent converts, could separate from their unbelieving spouses, but could not remarry.*

*However by the early Middle Ages (476-1500) most authors followed the position of Ambrosiaster (he wrote 366-384) who understood Paul's concession in 1Corinthians 7:12-15 as allowing the newly converted spouse to remarry if the unbelieving spouse departed. This position was enshrined in Church law in the decretals of Pope Innocent III (who reigned from 1198-1216)"*

*Canon. 1143 §1. A marriage entered into by two non-baptized persons is dissolved by means of the pauline privilege in favor of the faith of the party who has received baptism by the very fact that a new marriage is contracted by the same party, provided that the non-baptized party departs.*

*Canon. 1147 For a grave cause, however, the local ordinary can allow a baptized party who uses the pauline privilege to contract marriage with a non-Catholic party, whether baptized or not baptized; the prescripts of the canons about mixed marriages are also to be observed.*

## **5B.**

### **THE PAULINE PRIVILEGE OF 1CORINTHIANS 7:15 ENTERS THE CHURCH OF GOD**

In 1974 Mr. Armstrong announced that the previous policy of not allowing divorce and remarriage brought on a great number of spiritual widows and children who were having to be supported by third tithe as well as a great number of single people who desired to get remarried, but were forbidden by the church. So he adjusted the policy, and the scripture of 1Corinthians 7:15 is what he brought out. [Ref 9]

He explained that the believing brother or sister was married to an unbeliever before coming into the church. If the unbeliever is willing to live in peace with the converted one, God then 'enters into' and binds the marriage whereas he was not in it before. And the children are now holy whereas they were not holy before. Thus God's laws of marriage must not apply to nonbelievers. This is because the marriage of Adam and Eve took place before they were cast out of the garden and afterwards the nations rejected God's laws of marriage. Therefore God did not enter into and bind together all unconverted marriages any more. Thus, if the unconverted one departs from the marriage, it is not bound. Verse 15 then gives the converted one permission to divorce and marry within the church. And since the marriage was a legal, and not a holy one, the human courts would decide the custody of the children. If the children stay with the converted partner, they are sanctified through the converted one. If they go with the unconverted mate, they are not 'holy' (or under God's special blessing or protection).

Mr. Armstrong thus divided marriage into two types, converted marriages bound by God in the church whereby the children are holy and unconverted marriages bound by whatever legalities



they have in their nation's law system having nothing to do with God. He finalized this teaching in his 1979 article. [Ref 10]

When Mr. Armstrong died in 1986, Mr. Joseph Tkach became the Pastor General and began changing the doctrines of Worldwide until it became a Protestant Evangelical Church. But the doctrine of divorce and remarriage had already been changed by Mr. Armstrong in 1974. So today most of the split-off churches of God and Grace Communion International all have the Protestant doctrine of divorce and remarriage. [Ref 12] [Ref 13] [Ref 14]

## 5C.

### **EVIDENCE 1 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

#### **ARE UNCONVERTED MARRIAGES BOUND OR NOT BOUND?**

Mr. Armstrong's idea was that 1Corinthians 7:14 tells us that God entered into the marriage of Adam and Eve and made it 'holy' and this is why it was bound.

*1Cor 7:14 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.*

Unconverted marriages are not holy and therefore not bound by God.

This idea can be refuted by these scriptures that tell us what it is that makes marriages including the marriage of Adam and Eve bound by God.

*Mat 19:4 And he (Jesus) answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,*

*Mat 19:5 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?*

*Mat 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

Jesus said that because God in the beginning made them male and female, he joined the marriage together as one flesh. Since all of mankind from the beginning are still male and female, God still binds all marriages together as one flesh. In every culture and civilization we find words in all languages that mean 'husband' and 'wife'. Thus, although social customs may differ, unconverted marriages from the time of Adam and Eve are just as bound in one flesh by God as converted ones.

1. A New Testament example that unconverted marriages are bound would be the case of the woman caught in adultery.

*Jhn 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,*

*Jhn 8:4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*

This woman was obviously an unconverted woman who was committing adultery against her husband. If she were not actually bound to a husband, how could she be said to be committing adultery? Jesus told this unconverted woman to go and sin no more.

2. Another example would be the woman of Samaria in John 4:

*Jhn 4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.*

*Jhn 4:17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:*

*Jhn 4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.*

Jesus spoke to this woman in a parable about the 'living water' (symbolic of the holy spirit) that he could give her. Now we know that repentance and baptism are required before God will give his holy spirit.

*Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

So when the woman asked Jesus to give her the living water, he did not say, 'let's go to the river so you can be baptized and receive the holy spirit'. Rather, he miraculously knew her marriage history. He told her she had had five husbands and was presently living with a man who was not her husband. She did not understand it, but he was showing that this was a problem that was going to have to be resolved before she could receive the holy spirit.

3. A third example that unconverted marriages are bound would be the example of King Herod.

*Mar 6:17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.*

*Mar 6:18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.*

John the Baptist considered God's laws of marriage to be binding on Herod who was unconverted. He divorced his wife Phasaelis in order to marry Herodias. Her husband Philip was still living so she left Philip to marry Herod. So both she and Herod were committing adultery. [Ref 19] [Ref 20]

If God were to call Herod and he was converted after having married his brother's wife, this marriage would have to be abandoned before Herod could be baptized because it had been vilified by John while Herod was still unconverted. Thus it seems that the Church of God was originally right in telling people that they had to separate from adulterous marriages before baptism. And we can also learn from this that it is part of the church's responsibility to teach unconverted people, as John did, the truth about God's laws of marriage.

These examples all show that God's laws of marriage do apply to unconverted people. While it is true that most people since Adam and Eve have been cut off from God with no knowledge of his laws, their ignorance does not release them from his laws.

*\*Leviticus 5:17 If a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity.*

*\*Rom 2:12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;*

*Rom 2:13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*

## **5D. EVIDENCE 2 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

## **SINCE UNCONVERTED MARRIAGES ARE BOUND, THE SCRIPTURES THAT BIND THEM FOR LIFE APPLY**

Romans 7:1-3 confirms that we may not remarry by saying that marriage is like the law that has dominion over men as long as they live. It is binding until death, not just until a divorce.

*\*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?*

*Rom 7:2 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.*

*Rom 7:3 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.*

These scriptures to the Romans are verified by Paul's instruction to the Church at Corinth:

*1Cor 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.*

### **5E.**

#### **EVIDENCE 3 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

#### **THE HUSBAND WHO PUTS AWAY OR ABANDONS HIS WIFE IN MATTHEW 5:32**

One compelling argument to allow remarriage is that the spouse in 1Corinthians 7:15 is innocent, but has been abandoned. Why should the innocent abandoned spouse be compelled to live in celibacy for the remainder of life?

*1Cor 7:15 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.*

Consider that the man who 'puts away' his wife for reasons other than fornication in Matthew 5:32 is actually doing the same thing as the man who 'abandons' his wife because she became a Christian in 1Corinthians 7:15. But the innocent Matthew 5:32 wife who has been unjustly put away (abandoned) commits adultery if she remarries.

*\*Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery:*

Also to divorce your unconverted spouse because he/she deserted you would also contradict Matthew 5:32 because you are divorcing for a reason other than fornication. Divorcing a spouse for their departure from the marriage may cause that spouse to remarry and so commit adultery if he/she has not already done so.

### **5F.**

#### **EVIDENCE 4 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

#### **REMARRIAGE IS AN ASSUMPTION OF 1CORINTHIANS 7:15**

You can see that verse 15 does not clearly state that the believer is not bound to the marriage and is free to remarry.

*1Cor 7:15 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.*

Even though the words 'bound to the marriage' and 'free to remarry' are NOT THERE, this is the ASSUMED meaning. To base permission for remarriage on an assumption when remarriage is clearly defined as adultery (breaking the seventh commandment) in other scriptures is a very dangerous assumption.

## 5G.

### EVIDENCE 5 FOR NO REMARRIAGE

#### REMARRIAGE FORBIDDEN TWICE IN 1CORINTHIANS 7

Why would remarriage be allowed in verse 15 but forbidden in the very same chapter in two places?

*\*1Cor 7:15 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.*

*\*1Cor 7:10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*

*1Cor 7:11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*

*\*1Cor 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.*

Look at these scriptures and how they compare with 1Corinthians 7:15: In verse 11 the married husband is in the same position as the believer in 1Corinthians 7:15. His wife has departed from the marriage. Instructions to the wife are that she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. This implies that the husband must also remain unmarried so that he can also be reconciled to her. Verse 39 also would contradict the assumption that remarriage is allowed because here it says the husband and wife are bound until death, not just until the unconverted one departs.

## 5H.

### EVIDENCE 6 FOR NO REMARRIAGE

#### THE MEANING OF THE WORD 'BONDAGE' IN 1CORINTHIANS 7:15

*1Cor 7:15 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.*

The word 'bondage' is taken to mean that the marriage is not bound if the unbelieving spouse departs. So the converted one is free to divorce and remarry. Is this so?

What does the word 'bondage' mean? In the Greek, this word bondage (douloo G1402) means to make a slave of, reduce to bondage or give oneself wholly to needs and service to another as it is used in these scriptures:

*Rom 6:18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants (G1402) of righteousness.*

*Rom 6:22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants (G1402) to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

This does not refer to the marriage itself, but refers to the daily obligations of needs and services that we must perform toward our marriage partner such as a husband must provide for his wife and a wife must keep the house and cook for her husband. Another obligation is that both partners are required to provide sex to each other and withholding it is fraud.

*1Cor 7:3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

*1Cor 7:4 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.*

*1Cor 7:5 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.*

If the unconverted spouse departs from the marriage, he obviously frees himself from these obligations and the converted one is also freed from them so that he/she can live in peace. But the converted one must remain single because the marriage itself is still bound until death.

To base permission for divorce and remarriage on an assumed meaning of the word 'bondage' is gambling with our eternal life when it is not clearly stated here that remarriage is allowed and another scripture in the same chapter (verse 39) plainly forbids remarriage while the first spouse still lives.

*1Cor 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.*

## **5I.**

### **EVIDENCE 7 FOR NO REMARRIAGE**

#### **THE WORD 'HOLY' IN 1CORINTHIANS 7:14 DOES NOT MEAN THAT ONLY CONVERTED MARRIAGES ARE RECOGNIZED BY GOD**

*1Cor 7:14 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.*

The words 'holy' and 'unclean' in 1Corinthians 7:14 is taken to mean that God only enters into converted marriages. First let's look at some scriptural usages of these words.

The word 'unclean' was historically applied to unclean meats which God in Leviticus 11 forbade Israel to eat or touch. In explaining Leviticus 11, these scriptures show that unclean creatures are symbolic of unconverted Gentiles:

*Lev 20:24 But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people.*

*Lev 20:25 Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.*

*Lev 20:26 And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*

In Acts 10:9-28 God gave a vision to Peter showing all kinds of unclean beasts and telling him to eat them. Here, God was about to convert Gentiles for the first time and once converted, they are no longer considered unclean. Peter knew that this was why God showed him the vision when he said in verse 28 "God hath showed me that I should not call ANY MAN common or unclean."

The word 'unclean' is also often applied in the New Testament to 'unclean spirits'. We know that unclean spirits are bound by the laws and commandments of God, but they will not be subject to them. So it is with unbelievers.

*Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

This background usage of the word 'unclean' is helpful in understanding its meaning in 1Corinthians 7:14.

2Corinthians 6:14-18 is even more helpful in showing the specific differences between the clean and unclean (believers and unbelievers) and why God tells those who are converted not to marry unbelievers.

*2Cor 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

*2Cor 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

*2Cor 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

*2Cor 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you*

*2Co 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

As we can see here, there are profound differences between the believer who is a son of God and an unbeliever who is cut off from God and it is very difficult for both husband and wife to build a marriage relationship on the basis of one being converted and the other not.

But if the believer is already married to an unbeliever when called, God shows that his will is for the marriage to continue in peace. For a peaceful marriage, two conditions must be met. First, the unconverted spouse must be pleased to dwell with the converted one. Second, the converted one must obey the commandment not to divorce or depart from the unconverted one.

*1Cor 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.*

*1Cor7:13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.*

*1Cor 7:14 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.*

If these two conditions are met, the unconverted spouse is said to be 'sanctified' by the converted one. The word 'sanctified' means to be set apart as special as used in these verses:

*Gen 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

*Jhn 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

*Jhn 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

The holiness of God's presence in the believer and the good fruits of the holy spirit are available to an unconverted spouse which may lead to his/her eventual calling and conversion. Wherefore it is said to the believer:

*1Cor 7:16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?*

Peter likewise tells us that God's will is for us to maintain the marriage and to win over the unconverted spouse by our Christian behavior.

*1Pe 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;*

*1Pe 3:2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.*

*1Pe 3:3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;*

*1Pe 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*

The fact that an unconverted spouse is called a 'husband' or a 'wife' in 1Corinthians 7:16 proves that the marriage itself is recognized by God even though the spouse is unconverted.

As to the children being holy or unclean, the same two conditions apply, that the unbeliever wishes to dwell with the believer in peace and the believer obeys the commandment not to leave or divorce the unbeliever. If these conditions are met, then the unbeliever is sanctified by the believer and God says the children are holy as opposed to being unclean as we saw in 2Corinthians 6:14-18. That they are pronounced holy means that God is pleased to work with them, to bless them and help them as one of his own people. That the children are 'holy' has nothing to do with whether their parents' marriage is bound or not as we saw in Section 5C.

## 6.

### **DOES 1CORINTHIANS 7:24, 27-28 ALLOW US TO REMAIN IN WHATEVER MARRIAGE WE ARE IN WHEN WE ARE CALLED AND BAPTIZED?**

*1Cor 7:17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.*

*1Cor 7:18 Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.*

*1Cor 7:19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.*

*1Cor 7:20 Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*

*1Cor 7:21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*

*1Cor 7:22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.*

*1Cor 7:23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.*

*1Cor 7:24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*

*1Cor 7:25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*

*1Cor 7:26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.*

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

*1Cor 7:28 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.*

In these scriptures from verse 17 to 24 the Apostle Paul says three times - in verses 17, 20 and 24 that a person should remain in the same state as when he was first called to be a Christian. We

will call this the principle of 'same state'. He then gives examples. If a man is called being uncircumcised, he does not need to be circumcised. If a man is called being a servant, he shouldn't worry about it.

People reason that this principle of 'same state' can apply to any marriage entered into before conversion and they can stay in that marriage. But these scriptures do not give as one of the examples that a person can stay in the marriage he was called in does it? Wouldn't the principle of 'same state' apply to marriages? Yes it would if the marriage a person is in before conversion is a legitimate marriage. But the principle cannot apply to adulterous marriages entered into before conversion. To apply it to an adulterous marriage would be like saying that if you were a bank robber before conversion, then you can remain in the 'same state' after conversion. This does not make sense does it? It is true that baptism gives a fresh start and as Romans 6:7 says, 'He that is dead is free from sin'. But baptism does not change the definition of sin. An adulterous marriage is still adulterous before and after conversion and baptism does not forgive an adulterous marriage if you are going to remain in it.

Notice that the discussion about staying in the same state as when called ends in verse 24. Then a new discussion begins in verse 25 having to do with Paul's advice for virgins. It is reasoned that verses 27 and 28 allow divorced people to remarry, and that if a person was divorced before conversion, then baptism would forgive the divorce and if the person wanted to remarry in the church, it would not be a sin. The first mistake made is that the context of the scriptures from verse 25 to 28 is talking about advice for virgins and unmarried males who are eligible to marry. It is not talking about divorced people. The subject of married people who separate or are divorced was already talked about in 1Corinthians 7:11 and the conclusion was that they are to remain unmarried or be reconciled.

In verse 27 it says, "Art thou bound to a wife, seek not to be loosed." This is speaking of a man who is married and should not seek to be loosed by divorce. Then it says, "Art thou loosed from a wife?, Seek not a wife." This is speaking of a man who must have been loosed by his wife's death. For in verse 28 he is eligible to remarry. Widowers are eligible to remarry. If he was loosed by divorce and his wife still lives, he would not be eligible to remarry. Remarriage in this case would contradict these other scriptures in the same chapter:

*\*1Cor 7:11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*

*\*1Cor 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.*

When we are baptized, our past sins have been forgiven and put under the blood of Jesus Christ because we have repented of them and stopped committing them. If you are still going to live in an adulterous second or third marriage, or if you, being divorced, are going to remarry and so commit adultery, then you have not repented of and stopped committing adultery. Rather, you have deceived yourself that forgiveness means you can do this and it is no longer a sin. The Lord is not going to allow this kind of trampling on the precious sacrifice of giving his life for you.

*Rom 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Rom 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*



*Rom 6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

The whole symbolism of the Feast of Unleavened Bread that follows the Passover of the Lord's death shows that we must cast out the leaven of our sins as soon as we are aware of them, not continue in them deceiving ourselves that God now accepts them. So we have to ask ourselves the question: If this marriage I am in is adultery, is God going to forgive it if I continue in it? These scriptures answer this question:

*\*2Tim 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

*\*Jhn 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

*\*Pro 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

*\*Heb 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

While it is a painful and difficult thing for the newly converted to forsake an adulterous marriage or remain single if already divorced and the spouse still lives, this is what God requires in order to keep his commandment *Thou shalt not commit adultery*. The newly converted need to ask themselves, is it better to remain in a 'happy' adulterous marriage and forsake eternal life?

We must understand that being a true Christian is not a calling to an easy life. What if we have to give up a great job in order to keep God's commandment, *Keep the Sabbath Day Holy*. And remember how the Lord asked Abraham to leave his country and also to sacrifice Isaac his only son? And remember the man who walked away from the Lord's calling (Mar 10) because he was not able to give up his riches when the Lord asked him to?

*Luk 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

*Luk 14:27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

*Luk 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*

*Luk 14:29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,*

*Luk 14:30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

*Luk 14:31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*

*Luk 14:32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.*

*Luk 14:33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

*Luk 14:34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?*

*Luk 14:35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

The last two verses here show that if after becoming a Christian we are not able or willing to bear crosses and give up EVERYTHING for the high calling of the Lord, we will be like salt that has lost its savor. We must therefore count the cost before making the commitment to become a Christian.

## **SUMMARY**

We have looked at the history of the doctrine of divorce and remarriage from the early church and found that for the first five centuries the doctrine of no remarriage was taught. It was mainly the Protestant reformation that introduced the permission of divorce and remarriage and the Pauline privilege did not become popular until the Middle Ages.. The Worldwide Church of God originally taught no remarriage, but in 1974 adopted the Protestant theology. Today most of the split-off churches of God also teach the Protestant theology.

We have also looked at each of the scriptures supposedly giving permission for divorce and remarriage and have found the permission to be based on ASSUMPTION of what the scriptures say, rather than on clear statements that give permission. There is no clear statement in the Bible giving permission, but plenty of evidence showing that there is no permission.

The next thing to do is to teach the scriptural consequences of unlawful divorce and remarriage.

## **7.**

### **THINGS WE MUST UNDERSTAND ABOUT DIVORCE**

Matthew 19:9 gives permission for divorce, but there are three facts about divorce that must be understood.

1. When the Jews and the Romans spoke of divorce, they saw the meaning as a dissolution of marriage with the right to remarry. This is likewise the way the world sees divorce today. But when Jesus spoke of divorce, he meant a temporary separation, not a dissolution. This is shown in the example of the Lord in Jeremiah 3 (Section 3A), in the writing of Hermas (Section 3B) that shows the practice of the early church and in the teaching to the church at Corinth.

*1Cor 7:10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*

*1Cor 7:11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*

2. Matthew 19:9 gives permission for divorce (temporary separation) only for fornication (porneia). If you divorce for any other reason, Matthew 5:32 says that you cause your spouse to commit adultery.

*\*Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

*\*Mat 19:9 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.*

3. There is a reason why divorce is permitted only for fornication. This is best answered in 1Corinthians 6:13-20.

*1Cor 6:13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.*

*1Cor 6:14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.*

*1Cor 6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

*1Cor 6:16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot (Greek porne G4204) is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

*1Cor 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*

*1Cor 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

*1Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

*1Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

In these scriptures we see that verse 16 applies to all marriages because it goes back to creation and the marriage of Adam and Eve where God said the two shall be one flesh. If any married person commits fornication (porneia) they are sinning against the one-flesh union with their spouse and joining themselves in one flesh with a harlot (fornicator, adulterer etc). We see by verse 16 that we can join ourselves in a God-approved one-flesh union as well as an unlawful one-flesh unions with a harlot.

Verses 13-20 addresses all marriages from Adam and Eve, but also addresses baptized members of the church. And this is the answer to the question, 'why is fornication the only reason God allows divorce?' The answer is that baptized people are especially harmed by committing fornication (porneia) because their bodies now belong to the Lord as the temple of his holy spirit. Therefore joining in one flesh with a harlot **DEFILES HIS TEMPLE**.

*1Cor 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

*1Cor 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*

Just as our bodies individually are the temple of the Lord, the whole church is built up a temple of the Lord.

*Eph 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;*

*Eph 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

*Eph 2:21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

*Eph 2:22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

So the church must beware of defiling the temple of the Lord by allowing fornication within. Fornication (porneia) includes unlawful marriage defined as adultery, unlawful remarriage defined as adultery and any other unlawful sexual unions (incest, sodomy, prostitution, premarital sex etc) that make us one-flesh with the partner. We see that in this regard the

commandment of the Apostle Paul in 1Corinthians chapter 5 was to put such people out of the church. But if they repent, they should be allowed back in.

Not only are we given permission to divorce for fornication, but it is actually necessary to divorce for that reason. If your spouse is committing adultery and you do not divorce him/her, then you are consenting to a one-flesh relationship with an adulterer. This principle is shown in *The Shepherd of Hermas* (Section 3B) that testifies to the practice of the early Christians in following the example of the Lord in Jeremiah 3. (Section 3A)

The Lord divorced Israel because here it says in 1Corinthians 6:17 that just as we become one flesh in marriage with our human spouse, we become one spirit in our marriage with the Lord. And the Lord cannot be one spirit with an adulterous wife. Likewise, that we must not become one flesh with an adulterer is why divorce (separation until repentance) is permitted (necessary) for fornication (porneia).

When these facts about divorce are understood, all the scriptures become harmonized with no contradictions.

## 8.

### **THE SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES OF UNLAWFUL DIVORCE**

The following teaches us some of the consequences of divorce for reasons other than sexual immorality.

#### 8A.

#### **HOW UNLAWFUL DIVORCE AFFECTS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

In the days of Ezra (Ezr 10), many of the men were taking pagan wives against the commandment of the Lord in Deuteronomy 7:3-4, but they repented of this and put away the wives. Here in Malachi 2 the Lord was condemning Judah for doing the same thing. They were forsaking their wives and 'marrying the daughter of a strange god' (pagan wives). In the New Testament this would be like a man in the church forsaking his own converted wife and marrying an unbeliever.

*Mal 2:10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?*

*Mal 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.*

*Mal 2:12 The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.*

*Mal 2:13 And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.*

*Mal 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*

*Mal 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.*

*Mal 2:16 For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.*

Thus, to forsake the wife of your covenant in order to marry someone else the Lord says in verse 14 is 'dealing treacherously' with your wife. Another example of 'dealing treacherously' is Jeremiah 3:20 that tells us how Israel dealt treacherously with the Lord in unjustly departing from their marriage.

*Jer 3:20 Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.*

So it is not only remarriage to an unbeliever that is 'dealing treacherously', but any unjust departure from the spouse of our original covenant.

In Malachi 2:16 the Lord says he HATES THIS DIVORCE. How much does doing what God hates affect your relationship with him? In verse 12 he says he will cut off those who do this and in verse 13 says that he will not accept their offerings.

## **8B.**

### **HOW UNLAWFUL DIVORCE AFFECTS YOUR SPOUSE**

We have already covered how if you divorce your spouse for reasons other than fornication, you will be affecting his/her relationship with God if the spouse remarries or otherwise commits sexual sin. You will be the cause of that sin and God will hold you responsible.

*Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery:*

The question then is, 'How much do you care about your spouse's spiritual welfare?'

We are usually concerned about sins we commit ourselves, but in addition to Matthew 5:32, meditate on these additional scriptures that show how we can cause others to sin and so lose their eternal life. Causing others to sin is usually done by those in authority such as parents who fail to teach their children what is right or use them in unrighteous ways, kings who cause the people to sin by unrighteous decrees, spiritual leaders who fail to teach the truth of God or lead the flocks in unrighteous decrees. Causing others to sin may also be done by our bad example that others will follow. We can even do perfectly legal things that wound a weak brother's conscience and so cause him to sin.

*\*Lev 19:14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord.*

*\*Lev 19:29 Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.*

*\*Isa 9:16 For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.*

*\*Rom 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.*

*\*1Cor 8:11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?*

Therefore we ought to give a lot more thought to how all of our conduct and example influences and affects others.

## 8C.

### HOW UNLAWFUL DIVORCE AFFECTS YOUR CHILDREN

Because God designed the family unit as the place to nurture and bring up children, when it is torn apart by divorce, it is going to affect how the children are able to establish stable family units and resolve problems with the opposite sex in their own lives. Here is a good reference showing the affects of divorce on different aged children. [Ref 21]

Divorce in the church can also affect childrens' relationship with God because here the parents are supposed to be living the example of the relationship between Christ and the Church and obeying the Biblical mandates of how to treat each other. In God-centered homes where godly faith, love and judgment is the environment wherein the children are nurtured, they are going to see it practiced and be able to grow in their own relationship with God. Even in a home where one parent is unconverted, the children are called 'holy' if two conditions are met. 1. The unbeliever is pleased to dwell with the believer and 2. The believer does not depart from or put away the unbeliever. When these conditions are met, the unbeliever is sanctified by the believer and God calls the children 'holy'. I would judge that even if the unbeliever were to depart from the marriage, the children would still be holy because the believer was willing to sanctify the unbeliever. But if the believer divorces the unbeliever, then the believer is no longer sanctifying the unbelieving spouse and God sees the children obtained by that unbeliever as spiritually unclean instead of spiritually holy.

*1Cor 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.*

*1Cor 7:13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.*

*1Cor 7:14 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.*

So the question is, 'How much do you care about your childrens' spiritual welfare?'

## 8D.

### HOW UNLAWFUL DIVORCE AFFECTS THE CHURCH

First we must remember that it is God who commanded from creation, 'Let not man put asunder what God has joined together.' In other words, 'Do not let (allow) divorce (putting asunder) except for what God himself has allowed for fornication and even then the divorce is only a temporary separation until repentance and reconciliation can be achieved.

If you divorce for reasons other than fornication (sexual immorality) and the church allows it or treats it as the member's own business, and their policy is to not interfere, then the whole church has forgotten that this is a disobedience to God and has rationalized in their minds how it is acceptable so they can continue to fellowship with you. They will say things like, 'O we should not judge, but be understanding of people who are afflicted with divorce.'

Is this so - that we should not judge?

1Corinthians 5 gives the example of a man who was committing incest. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians that those outside the church God judges, but we must judge those within the church who are sinning. This is because we must keep the Lord's temple holy. If members disobey the Lord on divorce or other sins as mentioned in 1Corinthians 5 and the church says

nothing to them, then how are we keeping the temple of the Lord holy? Doesn't a little leaven that is ignored leaven the whole lump?

If we do not individually and as a church purge out leaven, it will take root, spread and affect everyone.

*1Cor 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

*1Cor 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:*

The question is, 'how much do you care about your example to other church members?'

## 9.

### **THE SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES OF UNLAWFUL LUST, MARRIAGE OR REMARRIAGE.**

We already know that unlawful lust is adultery:

*Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

We know that unlawful marriage is adultery:

*Mat 5:32 ...and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

We know that unlawful remarriage is adultery.

*Mar 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.*

*Mar 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

The above are three definitions of adultery besides the one that is having sex with someone other than your spouse. The consequences of adultery are that adulterers will not inherit the Kingdom of God

*1Cor 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,*

*1Cor 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

If we value our calling to eternal life, we must take heed to 1Corinthians 6:18 and FLEE from all forms of fornication including these definitions of adultery because they DEFILE THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD WHICH WE ARE and they will bring us to destruction.

*\*1Cor 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

*1Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

*\*1Cor 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*

## 10.

### THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

The unconverted world does not understand the spiritual meaning of marriage. But we in the church are supposed to know. The marriage covenant is the basis of God's interaction with mankind. Both the Old and New Covenants are marriage covenants.

*Eze 16:8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.*

When we become Christians we are espoused to Jesus Christ in the new covenant and will marry him at his second coming. This truth has everything to do with how we preach the gospel because the newly converted Christian needs to understand this destiny in the Kingdom of God.

*\*2Co 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

*2Co 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

*2Co 11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*

*\*Rev 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

*Rev 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*

Because of our coming marriage to Christ, we must understand that our physical marriage should picture the marriage of Christ and the Church as is shown by Ephesians 5:22-33.

*Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

*Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

*Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

*Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

*Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

*Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

*Eph 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*

*Eph 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:*

*Eph 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

*Eph 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*

*Eph 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

*Eph 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*



Knowing that God the Father is seeking a bride for his son Jesus who will honor, love, obey and be faithful to him through all eternity, shouldn't we suppose that he is watching how we treat our physical marriages? Isn't he watching how Christian wives submit to and honor their husbands and how Christian husbands love and care for their wives? Isn't he watching to see how we are keeping our marriage covenant faithfully?

For this reason, that Christians are espoused to Christ, we must have a different standard of marriage in the church than the world has.

\*We should obey Matthew 5:32 and not divorce except for fornication, because if we do, we will be CAUSING our spouse to commit adultery if they go out and marry again or otherwise get involved in sexual sin. And we know that we should not cause others to sin as well as not sin ourselves.

\*If our spouse does commit adultery against us, we should follow the example of our Lord who divorced Israel for her immorality, but he did not remarry. Rather, he asked her to repent and return to him and was willing to take her back if she did repent.

\*We should obey 1Corinthians 7:10-11 and if it becomes necessary to depart from the marriage, then agree to remain single or be reconciled. If our spouse departs from the marriage, we must remain single.

\*We should obey Matthew 5:32 and allow no marriage to a divorced person for it is adultery.

\*We should obey Romans 7:1-3 and 1Corinthians 7:39 and allow no remarriage while our first spouse still lives for remarriage is adultery.

\*We should obey 2Corinthians 6:14-18 and not marry an unbeliever, but if married to an unbeliever when called we should do everything we can to continue the marriage in peace. If the unbeliever departs we should remain single. (1Cor 7:12-15)

We must remember that these definitions of adultery (remarriage while first spouse still lives and marriage to a divorced person) are a form of fornication (porneia) which means any kind of sexual sin that makes us one-flesh with the partner. From every form of fornication we must flee and separate ourselves. For if this is allowed in the church it **DEFILES THE HOLY TEMPLE OF THE LORD** which the church is.

Some may use these scriptures to accuse me of 'forbidding to marry'.

*1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

*1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

*1Ti 4:3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*

My answer is this: If I forbid a married person to marry another, am I forbidding to marry or forbidding polygamy and bigamy? If I forbid a divorced person to remarry, am I forbidding to marry or forbidding adultery which the Lord says remarriage is? Forbidding to marry obviously refers to those who are forbidding people who are eligible for marriage to marry. Single people and widowed people have the right to marry, and I do not forbid their marriage. I forbid only unlawful marriage as God also does.

The Church of God has never really taught the true doctrine of divorce and remarriage that the early church taught and has gone even further astray in this since Mr. Armstrong changed the doctrine in 1974. Since then many thinking that they have permission to divorce and remarry

have done so, but their divorce for reasons other than fornication is actually sin and their remarriage is actually adultery. As a result, the holy temple of the Lord has been defiled.

We should consider that perhaps this as well as other corruptions in the church is why the Lord closed down the parent church and scattered the brethren into many small groups who are still breaking up into even smaller groups. If we wish to be on the path to eternal life, we must REPENT and quit committing adultery and RETURN to the right ways of the Lord while there is still time to repent.

*Pro 6:32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.*

*Pro 6:33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.*

*Pro 6:34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.*

*Pro 6:35 He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.*

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