

What The Bible Says About ---

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Part Thirteen

What The Bible Says About - MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

I approach this subject understanding how sensitive it is. There are probably very few families in this church that have not had a divorce occur somewhere along the line. It has happened in our own family and I personally came from a tragically-broken home.

The purpose of this study is not to heap guilt on anyone, for divorce is forgivable. Further, there are Biblical allowances for some of them. Adultery, physical abuse and atheism are among those permissions.

Far too often, when people who have suffered the pain of divorce they leave the Church. They feel attacked or ostracized. They often sense they are not welcome. I don't want anyone to feel that way today.

The purpose of this study is to learn what the Bible says about the subject. Divorce obviously does not please God and there is far too much of it among Christian believers. But because of the grace of God divorce is not the end of the road for believers.

I want to approach tonight's discussion on the most positive and practical way. So first of all let's laud marriage.

MARRIAGE

In 1955 Sammy Cahn wrote a pop song which was made into a major hit by Frank Sinatra. It had this lyric:

*Love and marriage / love and marriage
Go together like a horse and carriage.
This I tell ya, brother,
Ya can't have one without the other.*

I don't know if the song writer knew about the Bible, but his lyric was scriptural! Today more and more couples live together outside of a legal and valid marriage union. Many others are divorcing for no other reason than they stopped liking/loving each other. Or there is a third "party" involved.

1 I cannot emphasize enough that living together outside of marriage is a violation against
2 God and His Scripture. Let's take a look at the Word:

3
4 Matthew 19:4-6 [The Message]

5 **He answered, "Haven't you read in your Bible that the Creator originally made**
6 **man and woman for each other, male and female? [5] And because of this, a man**
7 **leaves father and mother and is firmly bonded to his wife, becoming one flesh—no**
8 **longer two bodies but one. [6] Because God created this organic union of the two**
9 **sexes, no one should desecrate his art by cutting them apart."**

10
11 Jesus made it very clear that marriage is between a man and a woman. One of the
12 primary purposes of marriage is:

13
14 Genesis 1:28

15 **And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill**
16 **the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the**
17 **sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."**

18
19 Procreation! God meant for children to be born to the union, which can happen only
20 with a man and a woman. But God also meant for the marriage union to be a lifetime
21 joy and pleasure.

22 23 WHY IS MARRIAGE SO SACRED TO GOD?

24
25 It is sacred to Him because a human marriage is a representation of the relationship
26 between Christ and His Bride, the Church. We are the Bride of Christ.

27
28 Rev. 19:7-16

29 **Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb**
30 **is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. [8] And to her was granted that she**
31 **should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the**
32 **righteousness of saints. [9] And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are**
33 **called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the**
34 **true sayings of God. [10] And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me,**
35 **See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the**
36 **testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**
37 **[11] And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him**
38 **was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.**
39 **[12] His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had**
40 **a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. [13] And he was clothed with a**

1 **vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. [14] And the**
2 **armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen,**
3 **white and clean. [15] And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he**
4 **should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth**
5 **the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. [16] And he hath on his**
6 **vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF**
7 **LORDS.**

8
9 All of Heaven waits in anticipation of this Marriage Ceremony! However, we miss the
10 point if we compare this coming wedding with those we experience here on earth. Part
11 of correctly interpreting Scripture is to put the verses in context.

12
13 In Jesus' time on Earth, the wedding was for the groom! And each wedding had several
14 components.

15 16 The Betrothal

17
18 I know several Palestinians in Israel whose marriages were arranged by fathers by
19 contract. It was not a matter of a young man and a young woman falling in love; rather it
20 was a contract put together by the father of the boy and the father of the girl. Sometimes
21 the boy and girl were still very young, perhaps still children - or even unborn. Once the
22 contract was finalized, IT COULD NOT BE BROKEN - except by divorce. We are not
23 talking about the marriage here, but the ENGAGEMENT. This is why Joseph found
24 himself in such a predicament with his fiancé Mary when he learned that she was
25 pregnant. He had to choose between:

- 26 ■ accusing her of adultery before the town elders and if she was found to be
27 unfaithful to him would be stoned to death; or
- 28 ■ he could "put her away privily" which meant divorce her.

29
30 We need to realize that our relationship with Christ is a reflection of that. When we were
31 saved, born again, regenerated, we became "eternally engaged" to Jesus. 2 Cor. 11:2
32 **For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one**
33 **husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.** The question then is
34 are we faithful to Jesus? Ephes. 1:3-4 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord**
35 **Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in**
36 **Christ: [4] According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the**
37 **world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

38
39 My friend, if you testify of being saved, you belong to Christ! You are "betrothed" to
40 Him.

1 Why do we anticipate with such joy the Rapture of the Church? Because, just as a bride
2 on Earth looks with eagerness to the day of her wedding, so we anticipate the day when
3 Jesus claims His Bride and brings us to His home.

4 5 The Presentation

6
7 In Jesus' time on Earth, it was the human custom when the young man and woman came
8 of age, that the man would say to his father, "Father in time past you negotiated a contract
9 between this girl and myself - our marriage contract. We have now waited long enough.
10 I want to claim the fulfillment of this contract." The father would then send his servants
11 to the house of the bride, carrying with them the original contract. The father of the
12 bride would then fulfill his part of the bargain and bring forth his daughter. The bride's
13 father would tenderly take his daughter's hand and place it in the hand of the father of the
14 groom. The bride had now been PRESENTED to the bridegroom. At this point in
15 those days they were legally married.

16
17 Now...what does that have to do with marriage in our day? Scripture is plain at this
18 point: Ephes. 5:25-28 **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the**
19 **church, and gave himself for it; [26] That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the**
20 **washing of water by the word, [27] That he might present it to himself a glorious**
21 **church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy**
22 **and without blemish. [28] So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He**
23 **that loveth his wife loveth himself.**

24
25 Can you begin to see the correlation between an earthly marriage and our relationship to
26 Christ? Small wonder God regards human marriage as sacred and holy.

27 28 The Wedding Reception

29
30 At this point the bride would move from her father's house to the place prepared by her
31 new husband. There would be a wedding reception. One writer has pointed out, "The
32 bride was moving out of her house, out of her society, out from among her friends. She
33 would be introduced into a new society; she would move into a new circle; she would
34 have new friends and acquaintances. At the wedding reception, or the wedding supper,
35 the marriage supper, the groom would gather all his friends so that he might introduce his
36 bride. The length of this supper would be determined by his social position and funds
37 available." Matthew 22:1-5 **And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by**
38 **parables, and said, [2] The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which**
39 **made a marriage for his son, [3] And sent forth his servants to call them that were**
40 **bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. [4] Again, he sent forth other**

1 **servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner:**
2 **my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the**
3 **marriage. [5] But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another**
4 **to his merchandise:**

5
6 How does this affect you and me, as followers of Jesus? Rev. 19:7 **Let us be glad**
7 **and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his**
8 **wife hath made herself ready.**

9
10 **Here is a question for you to ponder: Will all raptured believers go to the marriage**
11 **supper of the Lamb?** The traditional response is in the affirmative. But I question
12 that response. Here is the schedule for the raptured believers:

- 13 * The actual Rapture
- 14 * The Judgment Seat of Christ
- 15 * The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

16
17 Remember that the Marriage Supper is for “the Lamb,” Who is Jesus Christ. Our
18 American weddings are primarily for the brides. The Church is the Bride, but Christ is
19 the groom. I have spoken so many times about the Judgment Seat, where the raptured
20 and redeemed saints will have to open their “trousseau” chests, so to speak. We will not
21 be allowed to bring anything to the Marriage Supper that takes attention away from Jesus.
22 At the Judgment Seat it will be determined whether or not whether we are bringing in
23 carnal contraband, so to speak. Here is how Paul described it:

24
25 1 Cor. 3:10-15

26 **According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I**
27 **have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed**
28 **how he buildeth thereupon. [11] For other foundation can no man lay than that is**
29 **laid, which is Jesus Christ. [12] Now if any man build upon this foundation gold,**
30 **silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; [13] Every man's work shall be made**
31 **manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire**
32 **shall try every man's work of what sort it is. [14] If any man's work abide which he**
33 **hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. [15] If any man's work shall be**
34 **burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**

35
36 The gold, silver and precious stones represent what we did in this life for CHRIST, not
37 ourselves. Contrariwise, the hay, wood and stubble represent the work we have done on
38 earth for our own satisfaction. But our rewards will come only from those things we
39 have done here for CHRIST. Verse 13 teaches that every person's work will be tested
40 by fire. Well, if our life's work consists of hay, wood and stubble, it is easy to see that

1 all we will have left is ashes. "For the day shall declare it." What day? The Judgment
2 Seat of Christ (which is for BELIEVERS, not non-believers.)

3
4 Now here is my question: since we present our "trophies" or "awards" at Jesus' feet at
5 the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, if all a person has to carry into that ceremony is
6 "ashes," will that person really want to go in? Or, just out of sheer embarrassment, will
7 that person be like one of those foolish virgins Jesus talked about - and just miss the
8 whole event?

9
10 Imagine attempting to follow the Apostle Paul in presentation of life's awards to Jesus.
11 Paul will give the Lord: Corinth, Thessalonica, Rome, Turkey, Cyprus, Philippi and
12 countless other churches....plus he will be able to show he gave his very life for Jesus
13 (having been beheaded by Nero's cronies). Want to follow him at the Judgment Seat?

14 A HOLY COVENANT

15
16
17 All of this shows clearly what God thinks about marriage. It is truly a holy covenant. It
18 is a solemn binding agreement made between God and man. Malachi 2:14 **Yet ye say,**
19 **Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy**
20 **youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and**
21 **the wife of thy covenant.** Ezekiel added: Ezekiel 16:8 ... yea, I swear unto thee,
22 **and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.**
23 From what is said we see that the husband "sware unto" the wife (took an oath) and
24 entered into the solemn agreement not intended to be broken.

25
26 Way back in 1941 Jimmy Dorsey wrote a song that so many have recorded which
contains this lyric:

*In this world of ordinary people
Extraordinary people
I'm glad there is you;
In this world of overrated pleasures
Of underrated treasures
I'm glad there is you.
In this world where many, many play at love
And hardly any stay in love
I'm glad there is you.*

27
28 The Scriptures teach a principle about "covenant-breaking" that we seldom consider. It

1 teaches that any covenant - including the marriage covenant - is a binding, weighty
2 obligation. Proverbs 20:25 **It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is**
3 **holy, and after vows to make enquiry.** Deut. 23:23 **That which is gone out of thy**
4 **lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast**
5 **vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.** God
6 takes your wedding covenant seriously - even if you do not.

7 8 IN GOD'S IMAGE 9

10 Dennis Rainey of Campus Crusade observes: One of God's purposes for marriage is to
11 MIRROR HIS IMAGE. After God created the earth and the animals, He said, Genesis
12 1:26-27 **And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let**
13 **them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over**
14 **the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon**
15 **the earth. [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he**
16 **him; male and female created he them.**

17
18 What does it mean to mirror God's image? Rainey continued. Your marriage should
19 exalt God and glorify Him to a world that desperately needs to see Who He is. Because
20 we are created in the image of God, people who would not otherwise know what God is
21 like should be able to get a glimpse of our marital union and see Him.

22 23 Completing Each Other 24

25 Yet another purpose of our marriage is to complete each other and experience
26 companionship. No one can miss that meaning as detailed in Scripture: Genesis 2:18
27 **And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him**
28 **an help meet for him.** I can truthfully report to you that Darlene has made my life
29 much more complete and achieving than I could have possible done on my own.

30 31 Legacy 32

33 A third and vital purpose for marriage is to MULTIPLY A GODLY LEGACY. God's
34 plan (this again a reminder from Rainey) is for the home to be a sort of greenhouse - a
35 nurturing place where children grow up to learn character, values and integrity. Deut.
36 6:6-7 **And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: [7]**
37 **And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when**
38 **thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest**
39 **down, and when thou risest up.**

1 We can see clearly in this study how vital God considers our marriages. **Note this:**
2 **Your marriage affects God's reputation on this planet. This is why He loathes**
3 **divorce.**

4
5 DOES THE BIBLE MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR DIVORCE?
6

7 Yes, there are several "allowances," but they should be a very last resort to a believer.
8

Novelist Pat Conroy said of his own marriage break-up: *Each divorce is the death of a small civilization.*

9 There are several biblical passages that indicate what provisions are given for divorce.
10

11 1. Adultery Jesus said: Matthew 19:7-9 **They say unto him, Why did Moses**
12 **then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? [8] He saith**
13 **unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away**
14 **your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. [9] And I say unto you, Whosoever**
15 **shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another,**
16 **committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit**
17 **adultery.**

18
19 Lest that passage be used as an "easy out" of a marriage, I believe scriptures indicate the
20 adultery should be repeated and un-repent of immorality.
21

22 2. Desertion of a believer by an unbelieving spouse. 1 Cor. 7:15-17 **But if the**
23 **unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in**
24 **such cases: but God hath called us to peace. [16] For what knowest thou, O wife,**
25 **whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou**
26 **shalt save thy wife? [17] But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath**
27 **called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.**
28

29 3. Physical harm. Many theologically-conservative pastors, including myself, do not
30 believe that a spouse needs to be in danger of beating, etc. It is my conviction that any
31 man who hits a woman is a sissy-coward and is going to Hell.
32

33 4. In the Assemblies of God, the credentials committee (on which I have sat for 20
34 years) will allow a person to continue in ministry even if there is a divorce - IF that
35 divorce was predicated on fraud at the time of marriage. For example - a couple is
36 married and then one of the spouses learns that his or her spouse was previously married
37 and never informed him or her.

1 5. There is another exception: 1 Cor. 7:15 **But if the unbelieving depart, let him**
2 **depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called**
3 **us to peace.**
4

5 If you happened to be a follower of Jesus and your spouse left the marriage because of it,
6 you would be free to divorce and remarry.
7

8 WHAT ABOUT REMARRIAGE? 9

10 If the Bible makes a few allowances for divorce - which we have seen that it does - what
11 would be the purpose of the divorce unless it could be followed by another marriage?
12 We believe that Jesus assumed a person would remarry from His words in Matthew 19:9
13 **And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication,**
14 **and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put**
15 **away doth commit adultery.**
16

17 We should remember the grim fact here though that a greater percentage of SECOND
18 MARRIAGES end up in divorce than first marriages. And should a follower of Christ
19 marry a second time, the covenant made between the follower and spouse is equally
20 sacred as the first.
21

22 WHAT ABOUT DIVORCED PEOPLE IN CHURCH? 23

24 This would certainly include those who divorced and remarried prior to salvation. Paul
25 indicates that those in various social and legal positions should be accepted in the
26 condition in which they were when they were saved. 1 Cor. 7:17-24

27 **And don't be wishing you were someplace else or with someone else. Where you**
28 **are right now is God's place for you. Live and obey and love and believe right there.**
29 **God, not your marital status, defines your life. Don't think I'm being harder on you**
30 **than on the others. I give this same counsel in all the churches.**

31 **[18] Were you Jewish at the time God called you? Don't try to remove the**
32 **evidence. Were you non-Jewish at the time of your call? Don't become a Jew. [19]**
33 **Being Jewish isn't the point. The really important thing is obeying God's call,**
34 **following his commands.**

35 **[20] Stay where you were when God called your name. [21] Were you a slave?**
36 **Slavery is no roadblock to obeying and believing. I don't mean you're stuck and**
37 **can't leave. If you have a chance at freedom, go ahead and take it. [22] I'm simply**
38 **trying to point out that under your new Master you're going to experience a**
39 **marvelous freedom you would never have dreamed of. On the other hand, if you**
40 **were free when Christ called you, you'll experience a delightful "enslavement to**

1 **God" you would never have dreamed of.**

2 **[23] All of you, slave and free both, were once held hostage in a sinful society.**
3 **Then a huge sum was paid out for your ransom. So please don't, out of old habit,**
4 **slip back into being or doing what everyone else tells you. [24] Friends, stay where**
5 **you were called to be. God is there. Hold the high ground with him at your side.**

6
7 **Can Divorced Persons Serve On Church Boards?**

8
9 Quite frankly many churches in the Assemblies of God do not permit them to. But it is
10 my conviction this is an erroneous interpretation of 1 Tim. 3:2: **A bishop then must be**
11 **blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to**
12 **hospitality, apt to teach;**

13
14 Here is how we have stated it in our church constitution:

15
16 **Article II. CHURCH COUNCIL Section 2. Qualifications (Page 22)**

17
18 All those considered for the office of Church Council must fulfill the scriptural
19 qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9:

20
21 **1 Tim. 3:1-13**

22 **This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good**
23 **work. [2] A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober,**
24 **of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; [3] Not given to wine, no**
25 **striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; [4] One**
26 **that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; [5]**
27 **(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the**
28 **church of God?) [6] Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the**
29 **condemnation of the devil. [7] Moreover he must have a good report of them which**
30 **are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. [8] Likewise must**
31 **the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of**
32 **filthy lucre; [9] Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. [10] And let**
33 **these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found**
34 **blameless. [11] Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in**
35 **all things. [12] Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and**
36 **their own houses well. [13] For they that have used the office of a deacon well**
37 **purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in**
38 **Christ Jesus.**

39
40 **Titus 1:6-9**

1 **If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused**
2 **of riot or unruly. [7] For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not**
3 **selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; [8]**
4 **But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; [9]**
5 **Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound**
6 **doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.**

7
8 (The qualification of “husband of one wife” is not to be interpreted to mean “never
9 having been divorced.)

10
11 When Paul wrote this passage, polygamy was rampant and men would be saved who had
12 multiple wives. The scriptures never told such men to get rid of the extra wives;
13 however, they were precluded from serving in official positions. Thus the phrase:
14 “husband of one wife.”

15
16 By the grace of God and our adherence to the edicts of Scripture, may our homes, our
17 husband-wife relationship, be pleasing first of all to God and then to each other. This
18 was the Creator’s plan from the very beginning.

19
20
21
22
23
24 Next week: Missions Convention

25
26 In two weeks: What the Bible says about drinking alcoholic beverages and use of
27 marijuana.