

**Mark 10:10-12 — “Jesus’ Teaching on Divorce & Remarriage”**

- the 6 P’s for marriage: **why marriage?**
  1. marriage is for **PROCREATION** (Gen 1.28)
  2. marriage is for **PLEASURE** (Proverbs 5.18-19; Song of Songs)
  3. marriage is for **PARTNERSHIP** (Gen 2.18)
  4. marriage is for **PROVISION** (Eph 5 - providing for man’s lack/need; man caring for wife)
  5. marriage is for **PURITY** (Proverbs 5; 1 Cor 7)
  6. marriage is for **PICTURING THE GOSPEL** (Eph 5.31-32)

**THESIS — From Mark 10, we will see Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage.**

**I. THE FOUNDATION OF MARRIAGE (10:1-9)**

- A. God’s **Institution** of Marriage - God made it
- B. God’s **Blueprint** for Marriage (Mk 10.1-9; Gen 2.18-25)

C. God’s **Context** for Marriage

**II. THE PERMISSION FOR DIVORCE (10:10-12)**

- A. The NT provides 2 concessions - permissions - for divorce
  1. **Reason #1**—Ongoing, unrepentant sexual sin (Matt 5:31-32, 19:8-9)
  2. **Reason #2**—Abandonment by the unbeliever (1 Cor 7:12-15)

**III. THE PERMISSION FOR REMARRIAGE (10:10-12)**

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When divorce occurred on nonbiblical grounds, the person who remarries first commits "adultery" (Matt. 19:9) and the person who marries a person who was divorced on nonbiblical grounds also commits adultery (Lk. 16:18). In cases where the divorce was not for the two reasons stated above, the believer is exhorted to (1) seek for reconciliation, or else (2) remain unmarried (I Cor. 7:10-11).

Simply: A man or woman who has no right to divorce has no right to remarry. To do so initiates a whole chain of adultery, because remarriage after an unbiblical divorce results in illegitimate and adulterous relationships for all parties involved.

Be careful when considering marriage to a divorced person [Deut 24!]. The Bible gives a word of caution to anyone who is considering marriage to a divorcee. If the divorce was not on biblical grounds, the person who marries the divorcee is considered an adulterer (Mark 10:12).

***Two more related matters:***

1. Unbiblical divorce leads to church discipline
2. Unbiblical divorce *before conversion*.

**IV. THE SUMMARIZATION*****Marriage —***

1. is a divinely ordained institution
2. is the first and most fundamental institution
3. is covenantal and binding and permanent
4. is a covenant of companionship
5. is the place for true intimacy
6. is to conform to the model of Christ and the Church
7. is to radiate the beauty, joy and delight of the gospel

***Divorce—***

1. always stems from sin
2. is not necessarily sinful
3. always breaks a marriage
4. is never necessary among believers
5. is legitimate on the grounds of ongoing, habitual, unrepentant sexual sin
6. is legitimate when an unbeliever wishes to divorce a believer
7. is forgivable when sinful

**Remarriage —**

1. in general is desirable
2. is possible for a divorced person
3. is possible for a sinfully-divorced person through forgiveness.
4. is possible only when all biblical obligations have been met
5. is possible only when parties are prepared for marriage.

*We are Christ's by marriage. For when He purchased us, and paid so dear for us, when he died and satisfied Divine Justice, he did it with a purpose to marry us to himself!! We have nothing to bring him but debt and misery; yet he took upon him our nature to discharge all, that he might marry us, and take us to himself. So we are his by marriage! (Richard Sibbes)*

**HERE IS LOVE**

## VERSE 1

Here is love vast as the ocean,  
Loving-kindness as the flood,  
When the Prince of Life, our ransom,  
Shed for us His precious blood.  
Who His love will not remember?  
Who can cease to sing His praise?  
He can never be forgotten  
Throughout heav'n's eternal days.

## VERSE 2

On the Mount of Crucifixion,  
Fountains opened deep and wide;  
Through the flood-gates of God's mercy  
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.  
Grace and love like mighty rivers  
Poured incessant from above;  
Heaven's peace and perfect justice  
Kissed a guilty world in love.

## VERSE 3

Here is love that conquered evil:  
Christ, the firstborn from the grave;  
Death has failed to be found equal  
To the life of Him Who saves.  
In the valley of our darkness

Dawned His everlasting light;  
Perfect love in glorious radiance  
Has repelled death's hellish night.

## VERSE 4

That same love beyond all measure,  
Mocked and slain by hateful men,  
Lives and reigns in resurrection  
And can never die again.  
Here is love for all the ages,  
Radiant Sun of Heav'n He stands,  
Calling home His Father's children,  
Holding forth His wounded hands.

## VERSE 5

Here is love, vast as the heavens;  
Countless as the stars above  
Are the souls that He has ransomed,  
Precious daughters, treasured sons.  
We are called to feast forever on a love beyond our  
time;  
Glorious Father, Son, and Spirit  
Now with man are intertwined.

**A [very!] brief commentary / explanation on the New Testament texts on divorce & remarriage**  
Geoff Kirkland

**Matt 5:32**

Whoever divorces his wife makes her to commit adultery, except if it is for the matter of unrepentant sexual sin. Whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery, unless it is for the matter of unrepentant sexual sin. The phrase (except for sexual sin) is implied in the second phrase. Jesus’ words here make a concession for legitimate divorce only on the grounds of sexual sin. Jesus does not command divorce nor mandate it, but he permits it only in this case of fornication.

**Matt 19:9**

Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, except if it is for the matter of sexual immorality. If a man divorces his wife for any other reason, other than ongoing, unrepentant sexual sin, then commits adultery in the next marriage because his divorce was on unbiblical grounds.

**Mark 10:11-12**

Whoever divorces his wife and then marries another woman *for unbiblical reasons* commits adultery against her. That’s the general rule. Whoever may divorce his wife (for any reason at all) and marry another woman commits adultery against her. He’s the adulterer. He’s the guilty party. Also the woman who divorces her husband and if she marries another man, she is committing adultery. The assumption is that the divorced person will be remarried. But if it is for unbiblical reasons (anything other than ongoing, unrepentant sexual sin), then the person is committing adultery in the next marriage.

**Luke 16:18**

Jesus affirms that everyone who divorces his wife and then marries another person commits adultery; and he who marries a person who is divorced from a husband commits adultery. The exception clause is left out to show that if anyone divorces his wife *for any reason at all and then (as remarriage is assumed)*, marries another person, then that subsequent marriage is adulterous. And if you are considering marriage to someone who has been divorced, be very careful and slow in your consideration. Because if a person was divorced for unbiblical reasons, you would be committing adultery in marrying that person.

**1 Corinthians 7:10-11**

Paul gives instructions to two believers who are married and Paul says that the wife should NOT divorce the husband. But if she does divorce him, then she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. These are the only options for a person who divorces for unbiblical reasons — remain single or be reconciled to the husband. And the husband must not divorce his believing wife.

**1 Corinthians 7:12-16**

A believer who is married to a nonbeliever who consents to live with the believing spouse is the next topic. The believer must NOT initiate divorce nor separate from the unbelieving spouse (v.12, 13). If, however, the unbeliever comes to a point where he divorces (=leaves), then let him leave. The believer is not under bondage in such cases. He is not under bondage to stay in that marriage but he is free to remarry.

**1 Corinthians 7:27-28**

Paul so clearly says that if a person was converted that it would be wise for them to stay in the state that they were in at conversion. However, if the person does marry, they have not sinned. Remarriage is clearly in view here. For those who desire to remarry, they have not sinned (v.28).

**1 Corinthians 7:39**

A wife is bound as long as her husband lives in the marriage covenant. But if the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes — but he must only be in the Lord (v.39b).

**1 Timothy 5:14**

Paul even encourages young widows to get remarried so that they give the Enemy no occasion for reproach.

**Romans 7:1-3**

Paul explains that a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living. That means that she cannot be joined to another man at the same time while she is married to one man. If she is joined to another man, she is an adulteress. But if the husband dies, then she is free from that marital obligation and she is free to be joined to another man.

**Concluding Reflections:**

The Scriptures extol the dignity of the divine institution of marriage as a glorious permanent institution to bring glory to God and to reflect the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus and Paul affirm and uphold the divine design for marriage and the permanence of the marriage relationship.

But because of the reality of sin and the tragic consequences of sin, God permitted divorce in the Old Testament (Deut 24) and so does Jesus and Paul.

The NT provides only 2 allowances for divorce. Though this is never a quick decision or a pursued or desired option — and it is only a last case scenario after much prayer, counsel, reflection and with diligent seeking the Lord.

1. Divorce is permitted for ongoing, unrepentant sexual sin (*porneia*) (Matt 5:32; 19:9)
2. Divorce is permitted when an unbeliever abandons/deserts the marriage (1 Cor 7:12-15)

In the NT, Jesus and Paul provide for remarriage only when a divorce was on *biblical grounds*. If, however, the divorce was NOT on biblical grounds, then the believer must remain single or be reconciled to the former spouse. If the former spouse is an unbeliever or is remarried, then the marriage is no longer possible and thus the believer would be free to remarry — but only a believer in the Lord.

To pursue a divorce for unbiblical reasons would be sinful and for that divorcee to remarry someone would be to commit adultery (Mark 10.11-12) and it would make the other spouse an adulterer (Lk 16.18).

So then, Divorce always stems from sin though a divorce itself may not be sinful. Divorce destroys what God designed to be permanent. In summary: divorce is messy, never God's design, and it always brings hurt, pain and great grief. But it also must be said that the whole issue of divorce and remarriage (and all of the tangles and knots and circumstances) is *not* the unpardonable sin! God's grace and mercy is greater than all our sin (Eph 2.4-9).

## Marriage and Divorce in Matthew 19

Geoffrey R. Kirkland

Jesus is approached by the religious leaders of the 1<sup>st</sup> century regarding one of the hot-button issues of the day—divorce. Here's the story in full:

Matthew 19:3-9 3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" 4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, 5 and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? 6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

So, the Pharisees come to Jesus and ask him if a man can divorce his wife for *any reason* at all (κατὰ πάσαν αἰτίαν). In other words, is Jesus going to side with the Jewish group originating with a leader named Shammai who adhered to a very strict view of divorce, namely, one cannot divorce except for the most severe of circumstances. But on the other hand, the followers of Hillel said that one could divorce for *any reason* whatsoever (if a meal was burned, or if the wife put too much salt on the food, or if she let down her hair in public, etc.). Which group is Jesus going to side with?

Amazingly and brilliantly, Jesus takes them all the way back to the Word of God and the very first marriage—Adam and Eve. God goes back to the original design for marriage between Adam and Eve. God made them male and female and God brought them together to be man and wife. Then quoting Gen 2:24, the man is to leave father and mother, be joined with his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Supernaturally, what God has joined together in the covenant and bond of marriage, let no man separate (ἄνθρωπος μὴ χωριζέτω). In other words, man is not to divorce his wife that God has brought into his life.

But this still didn't answer their question. They pressed him further. Why, then, did Moses command them to give a certificate of divorce. Ironically, this context which they quote from Deut 24 is about "remarriage", not about divorce. Second of all, Jesus corrects their misunderstanding of the passage and tells them that God never *commanded* anyone to get a divorce. Rather, God made an *allowance* for divorce because of the hardness of men's hearts (τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν).

In other words, it is *never* God's plan for a man and woman to divorce. He never *wants* this. God never intends for this. Rather, divorce *always* is a consequence for sin. It always stems from selfishness, idolatry, and wickedness in some way, shape, or form. Therefore, to acquiesce to man's hard-heartedness and stubbornness, God allows men and women to divorce only under two very strict and clear reasons (and even then, divorce is never the first option but *always* the last resort).

The first allowance for divorce is adultery (Matt 19:9). Thus, when a man or a woman unfaithfully leaves the marriage covenant and has sexual intercourse with someone other than his/her spouse that is considered adultery. When that happens, the believing spouse has biblical grounds to divorce his/her spouse. But this is not

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mandatory. Forgiveness is possible. Restoration is possible. Reconciliation is advised. But nevertheless, sometimes this is not possible and thus divorce is allowed.

The second allowance for divorce in the Scriptures is when the unbelieving spouse leaves a believing spouse (1 Cor 7:15). Thus, when a believer is married to a nonbeliever and the nonbeliever is so fed up with the spouse—zeal for the Lord, evangelistic spirit, selflessness, love for Christ and holiness, disdain for sin, and hatred of all forms of lawlessness—and he/she leaves the marriage and *he/she* initiates the divorce, the believer is to let them go. The believing spouse is not under bondage in such cases. This is allowed.

Let it be said again that divorce is *never* the first way of escape. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and redemption is always the intention and it is always be God’s plan for a marriage. But, when this is impossible given the circumstances, God allows divorce in only two cases (and as last resorts)—adultery and desertion of an unbeliever.

**Ephesians 5:31-32** 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

May our marriages reflect the gospel of Jesus Christ as the husband selflessly loves his wife just as Christ loves the Church. And may the wife submit to her husband just as the Church submits to her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And by God’s grace and for His glory our marriages will result in life-long covenants of companionship bringing glory to God and joy to each spouse.

To God be the glory.

Pastor Geoff

# **THE POSITION PAPER ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE & SEXUALITY AT CHRIST FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH**

Compiled by the leadership of Christ Fellowship Bible Church  
*reviewed & affirmed*

## **1. The definition of marriage**

God created marriage and ordained marriage from the beginning to be a life-long covenant between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:18-24; Ephesians 5:22-33). Since God established the institution of marriage (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9) and God owns every person in the world since He is the sovereign Lord of creation (Psalm 24:1; Acts 17:24-25), then He — and He alone — can define marriage according to His purposes (Isaiah 46:10). Thus, the Bible does not recognize any marriage other than that of one man with one woman with the God-intended purpose of remaining together for life.

## **2. The horrible condition of man because of sin**

After God created man and woman perfect (Genesis 1:31), Satan tempted them to sin (2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9) and when Adam sinned, he plunged the entire human race which would follow after him into a state of sin and spiritual death (Romans 5:12). Thus, in Adam all sinned (Romans 5:12, 18). All humans that are born into this world enter as sinners (Psalm 51:5) and are enemies of God (Romans 5:6, 8, 10) and under His just wrath (Romans 1:18; 3:9). However, God's wrath can be propitiated through one atoning sacrifice that He has provided for sinners, namely, Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:24-25).

## **3. The sin of homosexuality as defined by God in the Bible**

The Bible speaks of the sin of homosexuality in both the Old and New Testaments (Leviticus 20:13; Genesis 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:9). The Bible shows that homosexuality includes the committing of the sexual act itself as well as the same-sex attractions while these may not necessarily commit the act itself (1 Corinthians 6:9; Romans 8:12-13; Romans 1:32; cp. Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25). All of this is sinful. God clearly shows that homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9; cf. Ephesians 5:5). Those who commit lives of sexual immorality will not go to heaven (Ephesians 5:5; Galatians 5:19-21).

## **4. The wrath of God that will come upon unrepentant sinners.**

God fully deserves to punish all human beings because of their sin (Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; Proverbs 17:15). Every person is, by nature, a sinner (Ephesians 2:1-3) and has committed innumerable sins against an infinitely holy God (Deuteronomy 32:4) and thus deserve the eternal wrath of God (Psalm 21:8-9). Because God is just, He must punish sin (Deuteronomy 32:4, 41; Psalm 89:14). Because God is fair, He will punish sin (Psalm 89:31-32; Psalm 7:12-16). Because God is infinitely righteous, He will infinitely and perfectly punish all unrighteousness. All sinners who live in unrepentance will face God's wrath on the day of judgment (Romans 2:5).

So then, the elders of CFBC wholeheartedly affirm the following...



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**We teach** that marriage was given by God as part of His common grace, and that it has no meaning other than as He has provided (Gen. 2:18–24). We teach that marriage is subject to the curse of the Fall but that believers, living in obedience to the Scripture and under the control of the Holy Spirit, can begin to experience peaceful, productive, and fulfilled marriage as intended by God (Gen. 3:16; 1 Peter 3:7).

**We teach** that the marriages of believers are to illustrate the loving relationship of Christ and His church, with the husband loving his wife as Christ loves the church and the wife responding to her husband’s loving leadership as the church responds to Christ (Eph. 5:18–33).

**We teach** that as believers’ marriages are to illustrate Christ’s relationship with His church, believers should choose to marry those who share their faith and regenerate life (2 Cor. 6:14).

**We teach** that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in scripture (Gen. 2:23–24).

**We teach** that marriage is always a public, formal, and officially recognized covenant between a man and a woman. We teach that without such a covenant, which may include a “common law marriage,” where valid in specific cases under pertinent law, prolonged conjugal cohabitation does not establish, and is not equivalent to, marriage (John 4:18). We teach that where no such covenant exists, or can be discerned, between a cohabiting couple prior to coming to faith in Christ, family units should be preserved to the extent possible and, if otherwise appropriate, solemnization encouraged. We teach that where a valid marriage has been established prior to coming to faith in Christ, the couple should remain married (1 Cor. 7:24).

**We teach** that God hates divorce, permitting it only where there has been unrepentant sexual sin (Mal. 2:14–16; Matt. 5:32, 19:9) or desertion by an unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:12–15). We teach that remarriage is permitted to a faithful partner, but only when the divorce was on biblical grounds.

**We teach** that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We teach that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (Heb. 13:4).

**We teach** that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pornography, any attempt to change one’s sex or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God (Lev. 18:1–30; Matt. 5:8; Rom. 1:26–29; 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1–8).

**We teach** that homosexuality, in particular, is subject to God’s wrath of abandonment, is a matter of choice and not inherited status, and epitomizes man’s ungrateful rebellion against God (Rom. 1:18–28).

**We teach** that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture or the doctrines of the church. We teach that the faithful proclamation of the Scripture, including the call to repentance, does not constitute hate speech, or hateful and harassing behavior, but is instead a fundamental part of the church’s loving mission to the world (Matt. 28:16–20; 2 Cor. 5:11–20; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:1–2).

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**We teach** that God offers redemption and forgiveness to all who confess and forsake their sin, including sexual sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. We teach that His forgiveness is total and complete (Ps. 103:11–12, 130:3–4; Is. 43:25, 44:22; John 5:24; Col. 2:13–14) and that God imputes the full righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21) to the believing sinner. We teach that the forgiven sinner has been cleansed from the guilt of sin, set apart unto God, or made holy, and justified before Him (1 Cor. 6:9–11). We teach that any man or woman who has received that forgiveness is “in Christ” and is a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17).