

# Divorce & Remarriage

The Church Fathers

# Why The Fathers?

- They were the closest to the time of the New Testament's writing.
- They are most familiar with the context and culture of the New Testament.
- Some even were discipled by an Apostle!
- Helpful to see what the early Church thought regarding this key issue.

# The Shepherd of Hermas (A.D. 90)

- *“What then shall the husband do, if the wife continue in this disposition of adultery? Let him divorce her, and let the husband remain single. But if he divorces his wife and marry another, he too commits adultery.”*

# Justin Martyr ( A.D. 151)

- *“In regards to chastity, Jesus has this to say: ‘If anyone look [with] lust at a woman, he has already before God committed adultery in his heart.’ And, ‘Whoever marries a woman who has been divorced from another husband, commits adultery.’”*

# Justin Martyr ( A.D. 151)

- *“According to our teacher, just as they are sinners who contract a second marriage, even though it is in accord with human law, so also are they sinners who look with lustful desires at a woman. He repudiates not only one who actually commits adultery, but even one who wishes to do so; for not only our actions are manifest to God, but even our thoughts.”*

# Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 208)

- *“That scripture counsels marriage, however, and never allows any release from the union, is expressly contained in the law: ‘You shall not divorce a wife, except for reason of adultery.’ And it regards as adultery the marriage of a spouse, while the one from whom a separation was made is still alive.”*

# Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 208)

- *'Whoever takes a divorced woman as wife commits adultery,' it says; for 'if anyone divorce his wife, he debauches her;' that is, he compels her to commit adultery."*

# Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 208)

- *“And not only does he that divorces her become the cause of this, but also he that takes the woman and gives her the opportunity of sinning; for if he did not take her, she would return to her husband.”*



# Origen (A.D. 248)

- *"Just as a woman is an adulteress, even though she seems to be married to a man, while a former husband yet lives, so also the man who seems to marry who has been divorced does not marry her, but, according to the declaration of our Savior, he commits adultery with her."*

# Jerome (A.D. 396)

- *"Do not tell me about the violence of the ravisher, about the persuasiveness of a mother, about the authority of a father, about the influence of relatives, about the intrigues and insolence of servants, or about household financial losses. . . . So long as a husband lives, be he adulterer, be he sodomite, be he addicted to every kind of vice, if she left him on account of his crimes he is still her husband, still, and she may not take another."*

# Augustine (A.D. 419)

- *“Neither can it rightly be held that a husband who dismisses his wife because of fornication and marries another does not commit adultery. For there is also adultery on the part of those who, after the repudiation of their former wives because of fornication, marry others...”*

# Augustine (A.D. 419)

- *"No one is so unreasonable to say that a man who marries a woman whose husband has dismissed her because of fornication is not an adulterer, while maintaining that a man who marries a woman dismissed without the ground of fornication is an adulterer. Both of these men are guilty of adultery."*

# Augustine (A.D. 419)

- *"A woman begins to be the wife of no later husband unless she has ceased to be the wife of a former one. She will cease to be the wife of a former one, however, if that husband should die, not if he commit adultery."*

# Augustine (A.D. 419)

- *"A spouse, therefore, is lawfully dismissed for cause of adultery, but the laws of chastity remains. That is why a man is guilty of adultery if he marries a woman who has been dismissed even for this very reason of adultery."*