Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

What Constitutes A Marriage?
Though Paul teaches about Christian marriage in Ephesians 5, he focuses more on how husbands and wives should relate to one another than on what forms a marriage. Thus, this question seems best answered by appeal to the creation ordinances in Genesis 2 which shows that marriage is God’s idea Genesis 22:18.

After God created the world and the first man, he decided man should not be alone. God created the animals, and Adam named them, but none was suitable as a helper for Adam Genesis 2:19–20.

God then created Eve from Adam and brought her to him Genesis 2:21–22. Genesis 2:23 records Adam’s words of recognition that she was the one suitable to be his helper. The passage ends Genesis 2:24 by setting forth the elements that go into making a marriage in God’s eye. When the following verses describe marriage as a permanent human institution, they use covenant language.

Genesis 2:24 states “for this reason” a man recognizes a particular woman as suitable to be his mate, he leaves father and mother. The word for leave (‘āzab) is a very strong word that means more than simple departure. It means “to forsake, leave destitute, or refuse.” The idea is not that a husband and wife no longer can have any relationship with their parents. But rather, they recognize that their relationship to one another must have priority over all other relationships. It is in this sense that they forsake or leave their parents.

Marriage also involves a cleaving to one’s mate. The word for cleave (dābaq) means “to cling to, remain close, adhere, be glued firmly.” In this verse it means that once parents are forsaken, the man will not soon return to them. He will stay with his wife and direct his affection and attention to her. She will do the same to him. When the ideas of forsaking and clinging are taken together, it becomes clear that marriage amounts to each partner committing their lives to the other. It is a pledge to emphasize one’s mate as paramount beyond all other relationships (forsaking) and to remain faithful to (cling to) him/her.

The verse concludes by saying they will become one flesh. This speaks of union. The point is not that now there is only one person. Eve still had her own body and mind, as did Adam. Likewise, the phrase is not merely a reference to the sexual union of the partners. Surely, the phrase refers to the sex act, but the context demands that it mean more. We believe the phrase is a metaphor meant to signify the bonding or uniting of the two as a married couple. The sex act points to the bond that has been created spiritually
and also signifies the creation of kinship or blood relation Genesis 29:12–14; 37:27; Judges 9:2; 2 Samuel 19:13.

This union is brought about as a result of two factors. The first is the commitment of life to one another, signified by the forsaking and cleaving of the partners to one another. The second is an act of God constituting or uniting them together. Jesus’ command in Matthew 19:6 not to put asunder those whom God has joined emphasizes the divine element in establishing the bond.

The historical view of marriage is that before the middle ages most legal marriages were either arranged or of mutual consent whereby two individuals, male and female, agreed to a union of marriage and thus became man and wife. There was no secular or religious authority that had to give approval, and the only thing that might be considered equivalent to our contemporary wedding ceremony was the cultural celebrations that might accompany the joining of a man and woman as husband and wife and would sometimes last for days. It wasn’t until the Catholic Church attempted to institute the rite of marriage under their authority that the question of legality and recognition before God and the State came into play. Even after this many of the reformers and protestant churches considered marriage to be a secular decision apart from church doctrine or sanction while others felt the clergy were the only ones who could establish a covenant of marriage before God and the Church.

When two people make marriage vows, they are making oaths not just to each other, but also to God Almighty. This is why Malachi says God is the witness that women are made wives "by covenant" Malachi 2:14.

In short, one is married when one makes marriage vows witnessed not only by the wedding guests but by God himself. Sexual relations alone do not constitute marriage, for marriage involves a whole commitment of two lives, not just a temporary coupling of two bodies.

If two people are married in God's eyes when they make their marriage vows, then is sex truly necessary to create marriage? Sex is not technically necessary to create marriage, as Joseph did not have sexual relations with Mary until after Jesus' birth, yet Matthew says they were married Matthew 1:24-25.

But apart from exceptional circumstances, Scripture simply does not picture marital union without physical union. Marriage is a "one flesh" relationship. Sex is not peripheral to marriage but is delicately woven into its very fabric. Even the apostle Paul, said that sex is so essential to marriage that withholding it is "to defraud" or steal from one's spouse 1 Corinthians. 7:3-5.
Sex does not create marriage, but sex cannot be separated from marriage. The gracious God who created marriage would have it no other way.

**Marriage Covenant**
The Hebrew word for marriage and the Hebrew word for holiness are the same word; kiddushin.

Marriage is a holy covenant between a Man and a Woman joined together through an oath or covenant made before God and Man and is binding unto death do you part and also symbolizes the relationship between Christ and his Bride, or the Body of Christ. The Bible teaches us to enter into marriage carefully and reverently, divorce is to be avoided at all costs. Honoring and upholding the marriage vows brings honor and glory to God.

A covenant as defined by the Scriptures is a solemn and binding relationship which is meant to last a life time. We should desire to know the Biblical truth about the faithfulness of the covenant keeping God and the Biblical truth regarding a covenant which God views as binding unto death which produces a supernatural oneness between covenant partners, withholding nothing from God. Then we will be pleased to live as we should in our marriages, and not to live as we please.

**God’s views on marriage**
The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” **Genesis 2:18**

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

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.” **Genesis 1:28**

The covenant of marriage is the single most important human bond that man and women can make with one another and was designed to bind a family together in a Holy union before mankind and God, until death do them part. It is no small wonder why the Lord is so passionate about the sanctity of marriage and the stability of the home.

**First,** a covenant establishes a bond between two parties, in this case the husband and wife. At the heart of this bond is a promise, the promise of faithfulness.

**Second,** a covenant establishes obligations. A primary obligation in marriage is fidelity. The husband is obligated to lead his wife in love, and she is obligated to submit to him in the fear of the Lord.
Third, a covenant is public. It is contracted before witnesses and is a solemn vows of a young man and woman before God and witnesses in the ceremony of holy matrimony. This public character of the covenant means that marriage is a social institution that society has an interest in preserving. As an institution, marriage is regulated by the Word of God and the marriage covenant is not simply a private affair, which becomes clear when we consider divorce. Divorce wrecks the lives of children. Divorce destroys peace of mind. Divorce upsets friends and family. For Christians, an ungodly divorce forces the elders of the church to exercise discipline. Marriage is the closest possible relationship between two human beings.

Each person is endowed by God with certain gifts, talents, and strengths. One person’s strength is not greater or better than another, so one person is not a greater or a lesser person. Each is created by God, being endowed with their unique gift. There is no greater or lesser, we are all simply unique and different. We are all made the way we are, fashioned by the hand of God, to accomplish that purpose for which we have been sent forth into the earth.

To accomplish his own purpose in the earth, God often joins together two completely opposite people together. If two people, having different strengths and weaknesses are joined together through the marriage covenant, each becomes greater than the two had been individually. Truly it could be said that the two have now become one flesh. This is perhaps one of the greatest mysteries of God's creation. Failure to understand God's purpose in the marriage covenant often leads to the two individuals thinking that they are better off alone.

Very often the strengths of the other partner is not truly understood and recognized by the other. They naturally do not have any interest nor appreciation for the others strengths or giftings. They begin to think that they simply do not have anything in common any more. They may begin to think that their spouse has become more of a hindrance then a benefit. They often become blind to the strengths which they have as been united together. Often the two may fail to realize God's purpose in bringing them together through the covenant of marriage and that they are bound together to fulfill God's plan upon this earth. God's promise to them is that if they are faithful to him and to each other, he shall give them the desires of their hearts. It is only God who really knows the purpose for which he has brought them together. For this reason Jesus declares: so then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.” Matthew 19:6

The need for the marriage covenant is not always known or clearly understood by the two parties. The covenant is based upon the strengths and weaknesses of the two parties. Apart from each other, they can never fulfill the plan of God for their lives; for each is interdependent upon the other to accomplish the marvelous plan that God might
have for their lives.

Apart from each other, they will set themselves to accomplish their own goals or to satisfy their own desires. But together, they somehow become a marvelous new creation. The two now mysteriously become one flesh and one new person. Apart from each other they are allowed to see only half of the plan of God for their lives. Together, as they continue to draw closer in intimate relationship, they begin to see the full picture of God's plan for their lives. Apart from each other, even though God might reveal the entire plan for their life, they can never truly succeed in accomplishing that plan. This is because both of them are missing certain gifts and talents which they need to complete the whole plan of God. On the other hand, together they can rely upon the strengths, talents, and gifts of their partner. Together they can succeed and achieve the great plan of which God himself has preordained for their lives. This is the true purpose and intent of the marriage covenant.

So marriage is a covenant. It is a covenant and much more. The Biblical marriage is a divine picture of Christ and His Bride. But in addition to that, the Biblical marriage speaks to us of the mystery of Deity. In the marriage the wife can be likened to the Holy Spirit, and the man to the Word of God. It takes both to produce life.

A covenant is a sacred promise. We promise to do some things, and God binds Himself to do others. To those who keep the covenant of marriage, God promises the fullness of His glory, eternal lives, eternal increase, exaltation in the Heavenly kingdom, and a fullness of joy. The scriptures seem to clearly say that at least three obligations are inherent in this covenant.

First, Marriage is eternal. Eternal implies continuing growth and improvement. It means that man and wife will honestly try to perfect themselves. It means that the marriage relationship is not to be frivolously discarded at the first sign of disagreement or when times get hard. It signifies that love will grow stronger with time and that it extends beyond the grave. It means that each partner will be blessed with the company of the other partner forever and that problem and differences might as well be resolved because they are not going to go away. Eternal signifies Spiritual repentance, forgiveness, longsuffering, patience, hope, charity, love, and humility. All of these things are involved in anything that is eternal (Spiritual), and surely we must learn and practice them if we intend to claim a true marriage as God planned for you and can only be received from the Spirit of God.

Second, Marriage is ordained of God. This means that the parties to the marriage covenant agree to invite God into their marriage, to pray together, to keep the commandments, to keep wants and passions within the marriage union. It means to be equal companions and to be just as true and pure outside the home as inside the home.
Third, Marriage is a kind of partnership with God. He promises a continuation of lives to those who are sealed together in the temple. There is a oneness with the Creator implied in the commandment given to Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth. There is an obligation to teach children the gospel, for they are His children too. So, we should have the family home in the evening so they can be taught scripture through family study, gospel conversations, and service to one another. There would seem to be an obligation to support and sustain each others callings and roles that each is given to perform. How can we claim to be one with God if we cannot sustain one another? I say that those who verbally or physically abuse their wives or husbands or those who degrade, demean or exercise unrighteous dominion in a marriage are not keeping the covenant.

Because the husband and wife are both strong and weak in different areas, the strengths of the one might often be perceived as threatening to the other. This fear often begins to manifest itself by the two competing against each other for leadership in the home, which leads to each party beginning to feel that their individuality is becoming threatened. It is not right that the husband exalts himself over his wife, neither is it proper for the wife to lift herself above her husband.

What is proper and ordained of God however is for each party to recognize that they are no longer two separate individuals, but have become one new living creature. Their two voices are to be united as one. There two minds are now to merge into one. Because if they begin to combat against each other and strive against one another, God declares: But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls Luke 11:17

For this reason, the two must recognize that when division occurs, it is in their unity being forever bound to each other that they are strong. It is in their agreement that they are unified and their relationship is made strong.

The Blood covenant
Can the marriage covenant be considered a blood covenant? After all, there are various covenants given throughout the Bible, and not all of them are blood covenants. God gave the woman a hymen that was designed to be broken in the first act of intercourse. In the breaking of the hymen there is the letting of blood and this virgin’s release of Blood upon intercourse deems a covenant between the two individuals.

Surely this ideal has been set aside today and even mocked. But it should go without saying, that the man and woman, who will keep themselves sexually pure before marriage, are able to bring into their marriage something to be treasured. You can only have one 'first time' covenant marriage.
The purpose of the blood covenant is to bind two individuals, families, or tribes together. The covenant was cut in blood to demonstrate that it was to be an everlasting covenant. The life or spirit of a man, according to the scriptures, is said to be in the persons blood itself.

The intermingling of blood represented that, not only were these two to be joined together in the flesh, but in the spirit as well. Although the physical life ends, the spirit lives on throughout eternity. A blood covenant represented a greater union and duration then one's own physical existence; it represented an eternal bond between the two bloodlines.

In a blood covenant, the two bloodlines were believed to be merged together into one. This ritual implied that the two families had become joined together as equally as the two covenant representatives. In a marriage blood covenant, the two families become joined together, not only the two representatives. This implies that even after the death of both covenant representatives, the families continue to be bound together by blood. In essence, one could say that spiritually, their two bloods have become one. Not only do the two individuals become husband and wife, but their two families become joined together as well. This is a union which is never meant to be broken.

Typically in a blood covenant two representatives must be chosen to represent the two tribes or families entering into covenant together. In the case of a marriage covenant, the two representatives of the covenant are naturally the husband and the wife. These two in a sense represent the two families be joined together through a blood union. The two families are now to be regarded as one. This is true in both in a spiritual and physical sense.

The wife brings her strength and power into the marriage by willful submission to her husband in everything. She offers all that she is to her husband through her willful submission to him. This is not to suggest that the wife is weak. On the contrary, her submission is a sign of her great strength. The willful act of submission of the wife to her husband is perhaps the greatest challenge a wife shall experience throughout her marriage. This must be by the willful act of her own will. The husband is not to force this submission from her. The gesture of her bowing down to him as unto the Lord is meant to be a symbol of her willful submission.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 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. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. **Ephesians 5:22-24**

The husband is regarded as the person of rank, power, and authority. He is the Lord of
his marriage and the King of his home. He is not to abuse this position of power and authority but rather to always use his position to demonstrate a love for his wife and his family. As the wife is called upon by God to lay down her rights and privileges in submission to her husband as Lord and Master, the husband is called upon by God to be willing give up his own life for his wife and his family and become the Spiritual leader of the Family.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself." Ephesians 5:25-28

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; it does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; it does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

There is no greater love that a man can have for a woman than that of loving her with the love of Christ. This love transcends all other loves and gives the Biblical marriage its true strength. While romantic love is certainly a part of marriage, it is not that kind of love that bonds the marriage in covenant. Only the love of Christ can do that. It is interesting to note that the Bible opens and closes with scenes of the marriage. The first marriage is between Adam and Eve. The last marriage is between Christ and His Bride. And these two marriage scenes tell the story of redemption. And so we have a Bible that wraps itself around the marriage.

The marriage of Christ and the Church
In the Old Testament there is the marriage covenant of God the Father with Israel which even divorce has not canceled it. In the New Testament, there is the marriage of Jesus, God the Son, and the Church. The marriage of Christ and the Church will never end. It will never be tainted with divorce, nor any other separation from Christ.

The marriage of Christ and the Church has not yet occurred. The Church is still only in the engagement period with Christ. There are some interesting passages of Scripture that point this out. In II Corinthians 11:2 it says that we are Christ's fiancée, that the marriage is yet to come: "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." In Ephesians 5:22-33 human marriage is given as a type or foreshadowing of the marriage of Christ and the Church. In Ephesians 5:27, indicates that the marriage is yet to come by using the future tense. It is not the past
tense: "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." The
fact that the Church is not yet married has some very interesting implications.

The marriage of Christ and the Church occurs after the whole Church is gathered
together in Heaven. God gives us a glimpse of this in Revelation 19-7-9: "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. And to her was granted that she should be
arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of
saints. 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."

There must be death first from Satan, sin, and self so that we can be remarried to
Christ remarried to Christ, a divorce is not sufficient. Death is the only thing that
can end a marriage and free a person to marry another. This is true in human
marriage as well as in marriage in the spiritual sense to Christ. In Romans 7 where
God states that death frees a person from the first marriage so that they are free to
marry another person, He also says in Romans 7:7: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye
also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to
another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit
unto God." This death occurs in the spiritual sense so that we can be espoused to
Christ. However, it also seems that there may need to be a physical death and the
destruction of the world and the "death" of Satan (bound and put in hell) before the
marriage of Christ and the Church.

The marriage of Christ and the Church will never, ever end. There cannot, and
never will be, a divorce of Christ and the Church. It is eternal security!
Human marriage is a type of Christ and the Church. We are told marriage is a type
in Ephesians 5. As a type, human marriage can not violate what it is a type of.
Therefore, if Christ would have been allowing divorce and remarriage in the
"exception clause" in Matthew 19:9, He would have destroyed the type. Human
marriage would no longer have been the illustration of the marriage of Christ and
the Church. If Jesus had stated that divorce would free a person in a human
marriage to marry again, it would not illustrate the eternal security of the believer
in which there cannot be, and will not be any separation from Christ.

Any other explanation of the "exception clause" than it referring to fornication with
another during the engagement period, does not line up with the marriage of Christ
and the Church. Any other interpretation removes marriage from being a true type
of Christ and the Church.
Because the time on earth is the engagement period of Christ and the Church, it is possible for a person to lose their salvation here in this life before they die.

Marriage, where the only thing that can end the marriage is death, is an illustration of absolute eternal security. In Heaven there will be no more death. Therefore, there can never be a divorce, annulment, or ending of the marriage of Christ and the Church.

If God permitted divorce and remarriage, marriage would no longer illustrate eternal security with Christ. The marriage of God the Father with Israel in the Old Testament and the marriage of Christ and the Church in the New Testament, both illustrate the permanence of marriage. Divorce does not end marriage. Only death can end a marriage and free one to marry another.

Marriage is a principle which was established before the foundation of the world and was instituted on this earth before death came into it. Adam and Eve were given to each other by God in the Garden of Eden before the fall. When Eve is presented before Adam, we hear Adam say, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh. *Genesis 2:23-24*

**Divorce and Remarriage**

Does God permit divorce? If so, does He then allow remarriage after divorce? How about in cases of marital infidelity? Or the case of a believing Christian divorced by an unbelieving spouse? Christian leaders and church pastors hold a variety of views concerning Christian divorce and remarriage.

It is important that we know and understand what God's truth is about divorce and remarriage. The subject of divorce and remarriage has the potential to be a deciding factor of eternal life or death, Heaven or Hell. One day each of us will be judged by Jesus Christ according to God's Law; not the local church's opinion of God's Law. If the Church has said that a particular divorce and remarriage situation is not sin and God says it is sin, it is too late on Judgment Day to find out God's truth?

Therefore, divorce and remarriage is a matter of eternity in heaven or hell: a subject of utmost importance for us to understand exactly what God has to say about it. Eternity in hell is too long to risk putting faith in the opinions and reasoning of others. We need to know what the truth is, and what God says is right and wrong.

Divorce and remarriage is a significant subject as many marriages are being
destroyed by divorce. Today, the divorce rate is no different in the church than among the ungodly. Everyone has an opinion about divorce and remarriage.

However, the personal opinions and human reasoning’s tend to obscure what God says about divorce and remarriage. This is particularly true when a line of reasoning is stated by a number of well respected, highly educated Christian leaders and counseling sources.

When false teachings are repeated as truth, those who believe that a particular erroneous line of reasoning is truth also see God's truth as error. God's truth on divorce and remarriage then does not make sense because it does not line up with what they have been told and with what they believe to be true.

God Hates Divorce!
God says: and this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. Malachi 2:13

In response to man's cry as to why the Lord will not accept his weeping and tears, the prophet says: "Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant." Malachi 2:14

God says " For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, for it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously Malachi 2:16

These scriptures show us why the Lord will not bless a man who mistreats his wife. Every woman is designed to be a gift to some man. But she is ultimately a gift from the Lord. The gift is to be cherished, loved, and cared for. This is covenant, two lives become one. And while it seems we are putting the greater responsibility on the man, this is because he has the greater responsibility. God designed the woman to be weaker in some things, so that she could fit the marriage in her proper role.

How men treat their wives is singled out as a reason the Lord refuses to answer their prayers. It seems Peter had this in mind, when he said, "You husbands in the same way live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. 1 Peter 3:7

We see that God hates divorce. Not only does He hate divorce, but when a Christian divorces their spouse, it removes them from fellowship with God and He
no longer receives their worship. Because God expresses His feelings so strongly about divorce, we need to be careful to correctly discern what God is saying, before we are guilty of removing ourselves or others from fellowship with Him.

Some people believe that Jesus' teaching regarding divorce and remarriage was addressed only to those who are in covenant relationship with Him such as disciples, Christians, members of His church and it does not apply to people outside the church since they are not Christians or citizens in Christ's kingdom, not members of the body of which He is the head.

It is argued that people outside Christ are condemned because they have not subjected themselves to Christ or because they have violated God's universal moral law; but until they become Christians, God does not notice or hold them accountable for violations of specific New Testament teachings such as divorce laws.

So it is concluded that, no matter how many times such people divorce and remarry before they become Christians, when they are baptized they just keep the companion they have then. But consider the following points:

Jesus taught that divorce itself is contrary to God's will. God made one man for one woman, indicating He did not intend for either to marry anyone else. He said they should cleave to one another and the two become one. God joins the man and woman, no human has the right to break that bond.

God's laws against sexual immorality are based on His marriage law. That same law is the basis of Jesus' teaching against divorce and remarriage. So, the marriage law, the laws regulating sexual conduct, and the divorce law all apply to exactly the same people. In particular, divorce and remarriage Jesus said was adultery, a particular form of sexual misconduct.

Hence, if we can find passages saying aliens outside Christ are subject to God's laws on sexual conduct, then it must be because they are subject to God's laws on marriage. It will follow that they are subject to His laws on divorce and remarriage, since all stand or fall together.

Jesus is not just head of the church or King of his Kingdom, but also God and ruler over all men, so Jesus teachings regarding Divorce and Remarriage were addressed to all people, Not Just to His Disciples or people in the Church. All men are obligated to obey Him because He is:

Jesus is God (Deity)
Jesus is part of the God Head (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) thus is Deity, so all people
must obey His commands. **John 1:1-14; 20:28, 29; Philippians 2:6-8; Colossians 2:9.**

**Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords**
Hence, He possesses authority over all people on earth, even the highest of human authorities. **Revelation 17:14; 1:5; 19:16**

**Jesus is Creator of all things**
Jesus created all things, so all must obey Him **Acts 17:24, 30, 31**

**Jesus is Judge of all**
Men will be judged according to the teachings of Jesus, even if they reject Him - **John 12:48.** If they do not obey the gospel, they will be sent to Hell - **2 Thessalonians. 1:8, 9.**
Furthermore, the law of Jesus and the law of God are the same. What Jesus taught is what was revealed to Him from the Father **John 12:49; 17:8, 20, 21, John 10; 16:15; Luke 10:16.**

So, all people are obligated to obey Jesus' law because it is the law of God, and God's rule is universal

**God makes the man and woman One**
Marriage is more than a marriage certificate from the civil government. In marriage, God makes the man and the woman one. Jesus also stated that it is God who joins a man and woman together as one flesh in marriage: "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 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? Wherefore they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
**Matthew. 19:4-6**

Divorce is a legal action that the civil government (not God) has established. A couple may go to the church to get married, but they have to go to the civil government to get a divorce. The Church cannot grant a legal divorce. Although divorce can end the legal aspect of a marriage, it cannot end the "one" aspect of the marriage which God has joined together. Once divorce occurs, a person is not single again in God's judgment, and therefore not free to marry another person. The "one" union with their spouse can only be ended by the death of one of the marriage partners. According to Jesus, a marriage cannot be ended by the legal proceedings of the court.

God says: so then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. **Romans 7:3.**
What is Adultery in Remarriage?
The term "adultery" is the Greek word "moichao" "to commit adultery". Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary definition for the word adultery: "Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband." Thayers adds, "To have unlawful intercourse with another's wife"

Jesus and the Apostle Paul make it clear that adultery occurs in remarriage. This is stated clearly in the following passages:

So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. 12 And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery Mark. 10:11-12

Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery. Luke 16:18

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 Matthew 5:32

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. Matthew 19:9

What does the "exception clause" mean or is there an exception clause at all?
There are two "exception clauses" on divorce in Matthew. One thing to take notice of is that they do not address the same thing. It is often implied that both "exception clauses" give permission for remarriage. Matthew 5:32 does not give an exception allowing remarriage. The exception only applies to whether the person initiating the divorce is responsible for causing their spouse to commit adultery.

That exception does not permit divorce or remarriage. The last part of the verse, "and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery" removes any question that this exception clause allows remarriage after divorce. Matthew 5:32 states: "But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, cause her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commit adultery."

The second clause is in Matthew 19:9. Jesus says: "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away (Divorces) his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another commit adultery: and whosoever marry her which is put away (Divorces) doth commit
It should be noted that modern translators have altered this verse to make it say something totally different than what Jesus originally said. The NIV (and most modern translations) reads totally different than the KJV. The first major change in the NIV is the incorrect twisting of the "translation" of the Greek word pornea as "marital unfaithfulness." By twisting the meaning of pornea, the NIV opens wide the gate for divorce and remarriage in every divorce situation. In every divorce case at least one spouse is marital unfaithful to their spouse. The very act of one spouse divorcing their mate is a serious act of marital unfaithfulness.

In many divorce cases both spouses view the other as being marital unfaithful in some way. Therefore, the NIV wrongly gives permission for at least one spouse to get remarried in every divorce situation!

The second major change to this passage is the removing of the last third of the verse, the phrase: "and whosoever marries her which is put away do commit adultery." It is wrong to remove words of Jesus from the Bible. This error has led many men and women into the sin of adultery, thinking that it was permissible to remarry. The Church can make changes in the version of the Word of God that it uses, but it can not change the true Word of God that Jesus will use to define sin on Judgment Day.

To translate the phrase "except for fornication or sexual immorality" as "except for adultery or marital unfaithfulness (as in NIV and most modern translations), giving adultery or marital unfaithfulness as grounds for divorce and remarriage has some problems. If a man's wife committed adultery, how would her adultery keep him from committing adultery if he divorced her and remarried?

Or to ask the question another way, is there any teaching or example in the Bible that would indicate that adultery by one marriage partner ends their marriage and makes them single again in God's eyes? There is no Scriptural teaching or example where adultery ended a marriage, unless the spouse committing adultery was stoned. If he or she was stoned to death, that would end the marriage. Jesus' words immediately following this exception clause make it clear that He was not giving permission to remarry after adultery. "And whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (He gave no exception). God considers the first marriage valid even after a legal divorce and remarriage.

What then does the "exception clause" mean? Jesus was speaking to Jewish men, the Pharisees, in response to their question when He spoke these words in Matthew 19:9. Jesus said "Except it be for fornication and shall marry another." Fornication
is sexual relations with another unmarried person before one is married, because sexual relations during a marriage would be considered adultery.

The Jewish traditions required a man to write a certificate of divorce to end an engagement. We see this illustrated in the story of Joseph and Mary. Joseph believed that Mary had committed fornication with someone else and was planning to divorce her even though they were not yet married, when God stopped him. *Matthew 1:19, 20*

What Jesus said to these Jewish men, the Pharisees, in *Matthew 19:9* is that divorce and remarriage is sin unless the divorce occurred in the engagement period. Even then the engagement could only be broken if the fiance committed fornication with another person. Jesus said that if the man divorced his fiance in the engagement period before marriage occurs, then it is permissible for him to marry another. The exception only applied to the Jewish custom requiring divorce to break an engagement.

We do not find the *Matthew 19:9* "exception clause" repeated any other place in the Scriptures.

The concepts outlined below clearly show that the so-called ‘exception clause’ in *Matthew 19:9* is an exclusion to divorce, not an exception to divorce and remarry. This will bring an understanding that *Matthew 5:32* is an exception to blame, not an exception to divorce and remarry; hence the divorce and remarriage issue fits together like a puzzle, and people can get peace for this difficult question.

While the scriptures (*Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18, Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:11*) are very clear on divorce and remarriage, many people find that *Matthew 5:32* and *Matthew 19:9* leaves them puzzled and uncertain as to what the Word of God teaches concerning divorce and remarriage.

**History of the Textus Receptus**

Many people that hold to the KJV and the Textus Receptus (TR) Greek manuscript are not even aware of the history of the Greek manuscript. They are surprised when you tell them that, for the most part, it was the work of a Roman Catholic priest. Let me give you a short history.

Erasmus (1466-1536) was a Dutch humanist who was ordained to the Catholic priesthood in 1492, and stayed loyal to the Roman Catholic Church until his death. He became very popular in Europe for his satirical writings like “The Praise of Folly” (1509), which poked fun at the church and state. He also wrote many scholarly works, and held a debate with Luther on the freedom of the will.

Then, in 1565, Bonaventure Elzevir reproduced the 1st edition of Beza’s Greek Manuscript – which is now known as the Textus Receptus (TR). The 1611 King James version of the Bible was based on this Greek manuscript and other translations from this historical era of manuscripts.

The Greek Manuscripts that Erasmus Used
When Erasmus put together his Greek-Latin New Testament, he used 7 manuscripts. Only 3 of them contained the Gospels. Using the Gregory-Aland numbering system, these manuscripts were MS1 (1200s), MS2 (1200s), and MS69 (1500s).

It is important to note Erasmus’ position on divorce and remarriage. Erasmus published his view of divorce in “Annotationes” (1519), which was that the remarriage of a divorced person was legitimate. He later developed a more elaborate defense of this position, which he published in the 1522 and 1527 editions of “Annotationes”.

Erasmus added the Greek word εἰ (if) before μὴ (not) into Matthew 19:9, thus changing the text to read from “not” to “except”. There is no information on why Erasmus added εἰ. None of the manuscripts he used support this addition, and the marginal reading from manuscript MS69 with this reading appears to have been added post-Erasmus.

Erasmus Changed the Latin Also
Erasmus’ New Testament was a Greek and Latin translation. He not only added this addition to the Greek manuscript, but his Latin translation was different from the Latin Vulgate, in that it included the exception clause and broadened the exception from “fornication” to “disgrace”.

The Latin word in the Vulgate was “fornicationem” and the Latin word Erasmus used in his Latin New Testament was “stuprum”, which is defined in the Oxford Latin Dictionary as “dishonour, disgrace, defilement, unchastity, debauchery, lewdness, and violation”

There is no information on why Erasmus added εἰ. None of the manuscripts he used support this addition, and the marginal reading from manuscript MS69 with this reading appears to be added post-Erasmus.

Nestle-Aland’s 27th edition, the most popular Greek manuscript, has rejected Erasmus addition of εἰ to Matthew 19:9. However, translations continue to translate the Greek “except for fornication”, even though they reject the Greek word εἰ that Erasmus inserted.
This addition changed the information phrase of “he may not have divorced her for fornication” into a conditional clause “except it be for fornication”. This introduced an allowance for divorce into the Bible translations that used Erasmus’ Greek. This addition has caused people to believe that if anyone divorces his wife for marital unfaithfulness, they are free to remarry and they are not committing adultery.

This means we need to warn those who are thinking of divorcing and remarrying that there is no exception (allowance) for remarriage. Those who are currently remarried who have a living spouse from a previous lawful¹ marriage are in the state of adultery, and copulation in that union is adultery.

**Biblical definitions**

1.) **Biblical Definition for Fornication:** Can mean any sexual congress outside monogamous marriage. It thus includes not only premarital sex, homosexual acts, incest, remarriage after un-Biblical divorce, and sexual acts with animals, all of which are explicitly forbidden in the law as given through Moses and still apply today Leviticus 20:10-21.

2.) **Those who commit incest** If a man has relations with his daughter that is incest and fornication. If a mother had relations with her son this is incest and fornication 1 Corinthians 5:1. If a brother and sister (married or not) have relations it is incest. Incest is fornication married or not!

3.) **Idolatry is fornication** Idolatry is in the Spirit what adultery is in the carnal. But what is it in the act of idolatry that makes it also fornication? The Greek meaning then and today in the same Greek language means some act of fornication has occurred.

4.) **Unlawful lust** unlawful lust includes the married and the unmarried. It is a falsehood to say that only single people can commit unlawful lust. Some claim "Lewdness is the unlawful indulgence of lust (porn is included in this) "lewdness" is a sin of fornication.

5.) **A harlot, a whore, female prostitute** Single or Married, It does not make sense to say that a married woman cannot be a harlot or a whore. The Bible is full of places where married women were harlots and whores. God accused Israel his wife of being a harlot Jeremiah 3:1, a whore Isaiah 57:3, a fornicator Ezekiel 16:29, and an adulterer Isaiah 57:3. These facts will not disappear.

6.) **A male prostitute** This classification of an act of fornication includes homosexuals and also single or married males who offered their services for hire. Fornication is identified here as sexual relations for money. This includes the male and also includes the female under the name whore, strumpet, or harlot.
7.) **Whoremongers** A whoremonger is having sexual relations with a whore or more than one whore. What is a whore? A whore is a woman who will have sexual relations with any man she chooses. All prostitutes are whores but not all whores are prostitutes. Some whores think that because they give free and do not charge they are not whores. This is false. The moment any wife has sexual relations with a man not her husband she is a whore and an Adulteress. The moment she exposes her body to other men for sexual purposes she is a whore. She is guilty of fornication and adultery and has broken her marriage covenant. The moment any husband has sexual relations with any woman or girl not his wife he is a whoremonger. If he also exposes himself to other women or a woman, he is a fornicator and guilty of adultery.

We can see that the word fornication includes a whole range of sexual conduct not connected to single persons who have unmarried relationships. It does not make a difference if a person began to commit a sin before or after they became a Christian; it is still sin. If they continue to commit the sin after they become a Christian, it is still sin. Asking God's forgiveness does not give license to continue in sin or to continue in an adulterous marriage.

**The Sin of Adultery**

**Adultery**, also called philandery or infidelity, is a form of extramarital sex. It originally referred more specifically to Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a partner other than the lawful spouse.

The term "adultery" for many people carries a moral or religious association, while the term "extramarital sex" is morally or judgmentally neutral.

"Thou shall not commit adultery" is the seventh commandment. "Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Adultery is illegal in some countries. The interaction between laws on adultery with those on rape has and does pose particular problems in societies that are especially sensitive to sexual relations by a married woman and men. The difference between the offenses is that adultery is voluntary, while rape is not. Historically, adultery has been considered to be a serious offense by many cultures. In some countries, adultery is a crime.
Adultery in remarriage is voluntary sexual intercourse with a person whose first husband or wife is still alive.

Adultery is not divorce, adulterating the marriage, nor the one time act of remarriage. Adultery is the sexual relations of the remarried couple the first time, and every time thereafter.

Jesus added to this and stated that a man can commit the sin of adultery in the fantasy of his mind without the physical act taking place. Jesus said that for a man to desire in his mind to have sexual relations with another woman, that man commits adultery in his heart. "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." 

Matthew 5:28

Divorce is a serious act of defilement against the spirit and every other aspect of the marriage. But nowhere in the Bible does God say that divorce is adultery. There is no definition in any dictionary or Greek that says that the action of defiling the marriage is adultery.

Adultery is voluntary sexual intercourse, either mentally or physically, where at least one of those involved is married to someone else. Defilement of a marriage is a consequence of adultery. But neither defiling a marriage nor divorce is adultery. Jesus makes it clear that adultery occurs in remarriage, not in divorce. And whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery. Matthew 19:9

When Jesus made that statement, He was stating that divorce does not end the first marriage. People have always assumed that divorce ends the first marriage, but Jesus said that it is not true. The sin of adultery can only occur if one or both of the persons involved is married. If neither of the persons are married the term adultery cannot be used. When Jesus said that "whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery", He was stating that when a man marries a divorced woman he is living with another man's wife and therefore is guilty of adultery. Divorce does not make a man or a woman single again. Divorce does not end a person's first marriage. That is why a person commits adultery when they marry and live with a divorced person.

Adultery could not occur in remarriage if divorce ended the first marriage. Adultery can only occur in remarriage because the divorced spouse is still married to their first marriage partner in Jesus' judgment. Jesus is the Judge we will stand before, for our hearing on Judgment Day and it is important that we understand our Judge's reasoning and logic if we want to enter Heaven.
God states that the sexual intercourse of a divorced and remarried couple is adultery. Therefore each time they have sexual intercourse they commit an act of adultery. As they continue to have sexual relations and there is no repentance, it becomes a state of adultery. Therefore, adultery in remarriage is both an act each time it occurs, and a continuing state of sinning.

Sin separates us from fellowship with Jesus and from entering Heaven. One is guilty of sin before God until they have repented of the sin and stopped the sin. One cannot repent of the "act" adultery but continue in it and expect God to ignore the fact that they are continuing to commit adultery.

The marriage covenant includes the right and obligation to have the sexual union only with the person with whom we have a Scriptural marriage covenant. To have relations with anyone else is "adultery." This too is part of the marriage covenant as God defines it. Marriage gives a man and his wife the right to a sexual relationship, but only with their lawful spouse.

**God and Israel's divorce**

Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament God uses the analogy of marriage to describe His relationship with His people, in the Old Testament with Israel, and in the New Testament of Christ and the Church.

In *Jeremiah 3* God states that He gave Israel a certificate of divorce. However at no point did that annul or end the covenant that He had made with Israel even though Israel had married other gods. "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." *Jeremiah 3:1*

In spite of the command by Moses in *Deuteronomy 24:1-4* that a divorced woman could not return to her first husband, in *Jeremiah 3:1* God says to Israel, "Yet return again to me."

God infers that the instruction given in *Deuteronomy 24:1-4* on divorce and remarriage is not a command that He gave to Moses. God says in *Jeremiah 3:1"*They say" not "I said" in referring to *Deuteronomy 24:1-4*. He then goes on to ignore the command that a divorced woman may not return to her first husband by saying "yet return again to me."

Jesus also implied that divorce and remarriage in *Deuteronomy 24:1-4* was something that Moses permitted because the people demanded it, but it was not a permission that God gave. Jesus said that from the beginning it was not so. In
Matthew 19:8 Jesus said, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Jesus at no point indicated that Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was a command that God gave to Moses. Hardness of heart is refusing to believe what God has said and is sin. Jesus could not endorse the excuse of hardness of heart as justification to do the opposite of what God had said.

In addition we see that divorce and remarriage did not end God's marriage covenant with Israel. God says: “They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man’s, May he return to her again?’ Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to me,” says the LORD. 2 “Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see: Where have you not lain with men? By the road you have sat for them Like an Arabian in the wilderness; and you have polluted the land with your harlotries and your wickedness. 3 Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there has been no latter rain. You have had a harlot’s forehead; you refuse to be ashamed. Will you not from this time cry to me, ‘My Father, You are the guide of my youth?’ 4 Will He remain angry forever? He keeps it to the end?’ Behold, you have spoken and done evil things, as you were able.” 5 The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: “Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 6 And I said, after she had done all these things, ‘Return to Me.’ but she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 7 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. Jeremiah 3:1-8

Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: Return, backsliding Israel,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not cause my anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,’ says the LORD; I will not remain angry forever. 13 Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, and you have not obeyed my voice,’ says the LORD. 14 “Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD; “for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. Jeremiah 3:12-14

Ezekiel was younger than Jeremiah. Ezekiel wrote from captivity in Babylon after Israel's divorce. He testifies that God's covenant with Israel was not ended by divorce and remarriage. For on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel,” says the Lord GOD, “there all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the first fruits of your sacrifices, together with all your holy things. 41 I will accept
you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. 42 Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for which I raised my hand in an oath to give to your fathers. 43 And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. 44 Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have dealt with you for My name’s sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel,” says the Lord GOD.  
Ezekiel 20:40-44  

What does God say can end a marriage?
God clearly says that the death of one of the marriage partners ends their marriage and frees them to marry another person. “By law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage”. “So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man." Romans 7:2-3  

Jesus also said that death ends a marriage in His response to the Sadducees. “Jesus answered and said to them, “Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? 25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" Mark 12:24-25.  

The apostle Paul’s said: “To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him ... 27 are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife ... 39 a woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 7:10-13, 27, 39  

Grace does not stop remarriage from being sin
The topic of the church granting a remarried couple grace often comes up with the subject of divorce and remarriage. The argument that the church can grant a remarried couple grace to continue in their remarriage relationship has become a stumbling block for many.
Many Christians advocate that the Church should grant remarried couples grace rather than say they must separate and stop sinning. The church frequently misapplies the term grace to mean a catch all license that the church gives a person that allows them to acknowledge something is not God's ideal, but if it is difficult or inconvenient to follow God's way in that area, to disregard it (do what is right in their own eyes). This wrong application of the term grace is used in many areas of the Christian life, not just divorce and remarriage. This philosophy has been very harmful to the church. Statistics show the beliefs and practices of many Christians are basically the same as those of non-Christians. The Church does not have authority to grant grace to a person in an area of sin and grant them permission/freedom to continue to sin. Over and over the Bible states "grace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ"

Jesus called remarriage sin. Therefore as Christians we do not have authority to grant a remarried couple grace to continue to live together. To grant grace to a remarried couple is rebellion against God. In granting grace, the church sets itself up as equal with God.

Grace comes from God only, not from any man or Church. Most of the verses in the New Testament that use the word grace also state that it is from God or Jesus. Nowhere is there any verse that the church has any authority to grant another grace for their sins. We can bless another with God's grace, but not from us. When the church grants another person grace in a sin area so that the sin is no longer viewed as sin, the church is setting themselves up as God and making the church equal with God.

This line of thinking has occurred before: "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; (10) And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?"

**Jeremiah 7:9, 10**

They thought they had received grace to continue in their sins but they had not. Grace is not an allowance to sin a little more than what the Bible says. Grace is not a license from God or the church for one to continue in sin as many would lead us to believe. Grace is not God overlooking our sin as we continue to sin after we know better. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

**Romans 6:1-2** "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." **Romans 6:15**

There is no grace for those who willfully continue to sin and don't want to stop or
change because it would be "too difficult". God's grace is not a license to do what is right in one's own eyes, and follow one's own beliefs, even if it is contrary to Scripture.

God grants grace in a divorce and remarriage situation when a person repents of their sin to God and to others, asks their spouse and others involved to forgive them, and forsakes the adulterous remarriage relationship. God totally forgives them. They do not have to do a certain amount of good deeds to receive God's forgiveness. They are freed from eternal punishment in hell and are granted eternity with Jesus in heaven. That is God's grace, not a license to continue in sin or to do what is right in one's own eyes.

When Jesus through grace forgave the woman caught in adultery, He also told her to do something. He said "go and sin no more!" Jesus did not give the woman grace so that she could continue to commit adultery. Jesus told her she had to stop committing adultery. When a divorced and remarried couple repents and receives forgiveness from God for the adultery that they have committed, they must change so that they can also obey Jesus' command to go and sin no more. If they go on sinning and committing adultery they will not receive God's grace but rather incur His judgment. There cannot be grace and mercy without justice.

When a person realizes that they have sinned by divorcing their spouse and remarrying another, and they go to God and confess their sin and forsake the sin of remarriage, God forgives them. It is only through the grace of God that they receive forgiveness. Without God's grace none of us would be saved because we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

**Spousal Abuse**

The question of spousal abuse is just one of many terrible situations people may find themselves in when they have a bad marriage. Others that come to mind are: spouse who is a drunkard, gambler, spends family funds selfishly, thief or other criminal, sent to prison for crime, etc.

All these, like spousal abuse, are terrible situations. But there is no Scripture that justifies divorce in any of these cases. In the case of spousal abuse, there may be some things a Christian could do about the situation, but divorce is not one of them. Possibilities might include:

1. Appeal to legal authorities for protection. This may even include an injunction that the abuser must leave the spouse alone completely for a period of time. Or it may lead to a jail term for the abuser.

2. A Christian is always free to flee a situation that endangers his/her physical life or
safety. Christians often fled to escape persecution. Most certainly, if there are children who are in danger, the Christian must act to protect the children. But the main point is that the action taken must recognize that the marriage bond continues and that neither party has the right to end the marriage or to remarry. Divorce is not a Scriptural option.

**What if the Remarried Couple has Children by the Second Marriage?**
The question arises: should a remarried couple separate if they have had children by the second marriage? The fact that a couple has children in the second marriage does not end the first marriage. The responsibilities that they have to their children in their second marriage does not change the fact that if they continue in the remarriage situation is adultery.

In addition, the responsibilities they have to the children in the second marriage are not more important than the vows and covenant that they made in their first marriage and the responsibilities they have to any children in the first marriage. God gives us some examples where children from a wrong relationship had to be sent away:

Abraham did his own thing rather than following the Lord, and took Hagar and had a son by her. After Isaac was weaned, because of Ishmael's scoffing, Sarah asked Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Sarah did not feel that Ishmael deserved to receive an inheritance with Isaac. Abraham was very displeased by Sarah's request because Ishmael was his son. However, God told him to not let it be displeasing to him and to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham arose early the next morning and obeyed God's command promptly and sent them away. **Genesis 21:8-21**

Another account is in **Ezra 9:1-15 and 10:1-44**, where many of the Israelites were involved in wrong marriages. They had married foreign wives and many had children by those wives. They recognized that they had sinned against God **Ezra 10:2**.

The solution to the situation of the wrong marriages was that they needed to put away the wives and the children that they had by those wives. It was a difficult situation and one that was very difficult to have the courage to deal with. It was so difficult that the Godly Ezra had to be prodded to take his responsibility as spiritual leader and deal with the situation. In **Ezra 10:4** he was told, "Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it"

"Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a
very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very
sore. 2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, [one] of the sons of Elam, answered and
said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives
of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. 3
Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and
such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that
tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. 4
Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good
courage, and do it." **Ezra 10:1-4**

Parents have a responsibility to provide for every child that they bring into the
world, regardless of the marriage situation when they were conceived. We are told
in I Timothy 5:8 "But if any provide not for his own and especially for those of his
own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Not only are
they responsible to provide for their physical needs, they are also responsible to
train all their children in the ways of the Lord. A parent can not teach their children
to keep all of God's commands, if the parent has willfully chosen to continue to live
in sin in an adulterous remarriage relationship. More is caught than taught, and the
children will not learn to keep all of God's commands as they should.

The children receive a greater spiritual training if they see their parents willing to
make whatever sacrifices and hard, hard decisions that are necessary to be in a right
relationship with Jesus Christ. Remaining in a remarriage situation for the sake of
the children, and living in sin, will not in the long run be a benefit for their
children. The children will grow up with the perception that one can do what is
right in their own eyes.

**The need to work at reconciliation with the first marriage partner**

Jesus told us, “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that
your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and
go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift"
**Matthew 5:23-24**

God further tells us "If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a
liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God
whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who
loves God must love his brother also." **1 John 4:20-21**

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He
who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a
murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." **1 John
3:14-15**
It is important that repentance and sorrow for all wrongs against one's first spouse be expressed to him or her. It is also necessary that the former spouse be told that they are forgiven for every wrong. Full reconciliation may not be possible if the other person is not willing to forgive.

It is of utmost importance that a person who is divorced goes to their spouse and tells them that they are sorry for all the offenses they committed to them and ask their forgiveness. If a person does not do this or is not willing to ask forgiveness, according to the above verses, God says they are not a Christian. In addition the person who has gone through a divorce must forgive their spouse regardless of whether their spouse asks for forgiveness or does not ask for forgiveness.

**We can believe whatever we want on divorce and remarriage, but...**

On the Great Judgment Day, we will be judged by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for what we have done and what we have encouraged others to do. Each person is entitled to have an opinion on divorce and remarriage. However, having an opinion, even a very strong opinion does not make it truth or make it right. Even if there are millions of people who have the same opinion, as were Israel and the prophets of Baal in the days of Elijah, it does not make the opinion truth. There is only one thing that is truth and it is what God says is truth. If we bring an opinion on the doctrine of marriage, divorce and remarriage to Scripture and find verses to back up and prove our opinion, we will not discern God's truth and God's judgment. We will lead ourselves and others into sin.

**WE MUST ASK GOD WHAT HIS JUDGMENT IS ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, AND SEARCH THE BIBLE SO THAT WE KNOW WHAT THE TRUTH IS. ALL OF SCRIPTURES NEED TO AGREE. WE DARE NOT REINTERPRET THE SCRIPTURES TO MAKE IT LINE UP WITH OUR OPINION. IF SOMEONE BRINGS A NEW INTERPRETATION THAT YOU HAVE NOT HEARD BEFORE, CHECK IT OUT IN THE SCRIPTURES. IF IT IS CORRECT, RECEIVE IT. IF IT DOES NOT LINE UP WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE, REJECT IT AS HERESY.**