

ET 2.1 – Introduction to Christian Ethics

Divorce and Remarriage

1. Preliminary Considerations

Importance of the subject.

Sends a message about God

- he separates from evil / imposes sanctions on covenant transgression
- he is covenantally faithful

People (inside and outside the church) are confused and hurting.

God's way is best.

Method. Scriptures sufficient and authoritative

Assumptions. Focussing attention upon divorce and remarriage does NOT mean that these are the most important things to be said in the whole area of marriage relationships. All agree that

- marriage is intended to be lifelong
- physical death ends marriage
- divorce in the OT was a God-given provision for a fallen world
- forgiveness and reconciliation are to be sought as far as they possibly can
- divorce, if permissible at all, is a last resort.

Difficulties

- depth of personal involvement
- personal pain, difficulty of Biblical interpretation
- cultural context and expectations
- rel between OT and NT
- what do with silence / background debates
- range of denominational stances

Just some of the associated issues which are important but which we will not be dealing with: Separation; How do we proceed when the teaching of the church on divorce is very different from the statutory position?; Marriage prep; Ministry to the divorced -evangelistic and pastoral; Developing a local church policy on divorce and remarriage; Relating to your denomination and to previous / local ministers; Polygamy (Geisler: precedent – Adam; precept – Dt 17.17; prescription v adultery – Ex 20.17 sing; populations proportion; punishment – every polygamist suffered; Ovey – “reduces time for reading”); Singleness; What happens to the children?; Marrying two unbelievers?; Marrying a believer and an unbeliever?; Homosexual marriage; Pre-nuptial agreements; Teaching on a topic so many disagree about; Preaching re marriage, warnings re adultery.

2. Some key questions upon which Christians disagree

1. What is marriage and what is divorce?

2. How many grounds for valid divorce are there?

- none (but separation may be necessary)
- just adultery
- adultery, desertion by a non-believer
- adultery, desertion by a non-believer, other related matters
- lots and lots

3. Is remarriage possible after divorce?

- no
- for the "innocent" party after a valid divorce
- for both parties after a valid divorce with particular conditions upon the "guilty" party
- for anyone after any divorce

3. Nature of the marriage bond

a) merely voluntary - human will alone: "park your car"

BUT "what God has joined. .."

b) metaphysical/sacramental: "bake a cake"

- "marriage results in permanent kinship ties" -Heth
- "legal divorce does not dissolve 'one flesh'" -Heth
- "It is one thing to speak of an *extrinsic* or legal dissolution of the marital *love* relationship but quite another to speak of an *intrinsic* or constitutional dissolution of the marital *kinship* relationship." - Heth
- a man cannot 'divorce' or sever the kinship relationship with his wife who is his own flesh and blood through the covenant and consummation of marriage." Heth
- "One flesh means' one person' ...Parent and child always remain two individuals. But the most important thing about husband and wife in Christ's teaching is that 'they are no longer two'." Cornes
- "Couples cannot destroy the oneness God gave them when they married. .. Remarriage, Jesus teaches, is adultery. This can only be because the original marriage -the oneness, the joining together -still exists. This is why a divorced Christian, even when reconciliation is no longer possible must continue to think: 'I am married and therefore not free to contemplate marriage to anyone else.' While married, he could never think of marrying a second partner. His legal divorce changes nothing in God's eyes and therefore should change nothing in his: he is still married, he is not free to contract a second marriage." -Cornes.

BUT

1. Biblical evidence for indissoluble bond? Where does this idea come from? What IS marriage in the Bible?
2. Gen 2.24: (*bāsār ʿeḥād*) . There is "one flesh" in the physical sense without marriage in the Bible – Ex 22.16-17, Dinah, Tamar etc. If "one flesh" = marriage then marriage is more than physical union
3. "One flesh" and I Corinthians 6
Two shall become one flesh – (*esontai hoi duo eis sarka mian*)
Does "one flesh" = married or not?
 - if so, then have become married to prostitute in I Cor 6
 - if only first time then how is it possible for a married person to then become "one flesh" with the prostitute – unless this is simply a form of polygamy (and is that the way the problem is framed?)
 - actually, the way it is framed is about the BODY – this is about sex, not about the formation of a metaphysical entity
4. Since all agree that death ends marriage, are there other "deaths" than physical?
Genesis 2, Romans 6- 7, John 8, Eph 2

Martin Luther: "The temporal sword and government should therefore still put adulterers to death, for whoever commits adultery has in fact himself already departed and is considered as one dead. Therefore the other [the innocent party] may remarry just as though his spouse had died." (Luther, *The Estate of Marriage*, in *Works* 45.32, quoted in Instone-Brewer, *DRB*, 284)

Westminster Confession, Chapter 24,§§5: V. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce: and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.

Orthodox Church: Concept of the death of a marriage -the divorce is the burial.

c) Covenant: "*build a house*"

- difficulty of definition
- personal structural bond (legal authority, personal oath commitment -involving God as witness and sanction-imposer/ enforcer, terms of fulfilment, divine sanctions etc); unilaterally established or bilaterally established. (Genesis 15, Deuteronomy 26ff, Jeremiah 34)
- Biblical warrant for thinking of the marriage bond as covenantal - Proverbs 2.17, Malachi 2.14-16, Ephesians 5
- //s -God and Israel; Christ and church; Christ and believer (baptism)
- not surprising that a certificate of divorce is a "document of cutting off" – (*sēper k^érîṭûṭ*) (4x in BHS – Dt 24.1, 3; Is 50.1; Jer 3.8)
- Can covenants end? What would that mean?
 1. One of the parties breaks the terms of the covenant and so comes under covenant curse? Yes, but covenant curse is not the same as covenant annulment (apostates are not the same as pagans).
 2. One of the parties breaks the terms of the covenant so that it is as if the covenant had never happened? No evidence for this.
 3. One of the parties breaks the terms of the covenant in such a way as effects their own detachment covenant relationship? No reason to think so.
 4. One of the parties breaks the terms of the covenant and at the request of the innocent party the relevant authority imposes covenant annulment as itself the sanction.

In a covenantal understanding of divorce, #4. above would be the model for claiming that in a divorce God honours the appeal of the innocent party to impose the appropriate sanction which is death (physical or covenantal). The divorce certificate is a **document of cutting off** – it's a copy of the sentence announced by God and handed over to the innocent party who, in turn, hands it over to the guilty party.

4. Nature of divorce

- indissolubilist 1: it is impossible to break the marriage bond and therefore there can be no 'legal recognition' that it has been broken -divorce is an impossibility or a lie
- indissolubilist 2: it is impossible to break the marriage bond but we may have to act as though it had been broken -a divorce is a way of stating that for all practical purposes the marriage relationship is over even though the marriage bond remains intact (and therefore remarriage would be adulterous)
- covenantal: distinguish between
 - a) actions which break the terms of the covenant in such a way as warrants death
 - b) the legal execution of the "death" sentence – the bill of divorce (Is 50.1, Jer 3.8)
- covenantal: it is possible to break the terms of the covenant in such a way as warrants death and yet for the innocent party not to demand the "death" penalty (which would be documented in the bill of divorce). The innocent party may forgive (absorb the penalty / make atonement).
- covenantal: divorce is only legitimate where the covenant terms have been broken in those ways which God says warrant "death". Divorce on other grounds is a legal mistake / fiction / whitewash.
- Thus, one of the key questions is "what are those transgressions of the terms of the marriage covenant on the basis of which the innocent party may legitimately appeal to God for a sentence of death to be passed on the guilty party (and thus for certification of this which will be handed over to the guilty party as a "divorce"?)"

5. Some Old Testament passages

a) Genesis 2.24

Though imprecise, there is help in the frequently used analysis of full and proper marriage as constituted by:

- a) civil/ social - public establishment of new social unit- "leave"
- b) personal - faithful love of covenant commitment - "cleave"
- c) physical - sexual union - "one flesh"

b) Exodus 21.10-11

Instone-Brewer argues that the application of these verses was almost universally recognised in Jewish tradition as providing grounds for divorce in cases of neglect. This lies behind God's protestations of his covenant faithfulness in Ezekiel 16, for example and informs I Cor 7.3-5, 32-34.

c) Deuteronomy 24.1-4

- what is the cause of offense / indecent thing / 'nakedness of a thing' (Dt 23.14) / 'something about her he doesn't like' (v.1) (BHS: *ʿerwaṭ dābār* / LXX *aschēmon pragma*)
- does God regulate what is in itself sinful? (as against the consequences of sin. .. burial, rules for war, punishment etc and remedies for sin/ways of dealing with it?)
- is the first divorce a legitimate divorce? if so, then not only is remarriage possible but remarriage for the 'guilty' party is possible. (v2)
- does legitimate divorce = death (v.3)?
- in what way has being divorced by the first man or married to the second man (or being divorced a second time?) 'defiled' the woman in relation to her first husband (but not, apparently in relation to a possible third husband)? (v.4) could she have married a third man?

d) Leviticus 21.14, 22.12-13

Maybe this places the divorcee in the same 'marital status' as the widow and others - namely, free to marry, though not to marry a priest.

e) Malachi 2.14-16.

Difficult translation issues. ESV "For the man who hates and divorces, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit and do not be faithless."

f) God's marriage relationship with Israel

Is a harmonisation possible or necessary? And is it instructive? Does God divorce? Does he remarry?

- God marries Israel
- This turns out to be marriage to two sisters - Israel and Judah - Ezek 23
- God meets all his covenant obligations - and more - Ezek 16
- God divorces Israel for persistent violation of the covenant - Hosea 2, Jer 3
- It looks as though God has divorced Judah too - Jer 3
- But actually he has withdrawn from her (sent her away – 50.1c), not divorced her - Isaiah 50, 54
- And even Israel may come back - though this is not in violation of Deut 24.1-4 because she will do so only by reuniting with Judah - Hosea 2-3, Jeremiah 3.15-18, Ezekiel 37.15-28

6. The teaching of Jesus

a) relationship to OT teaching?

- Mosaic law was positively wrong / second best / good only for a limited time etc -so Jesus sets it aside and goes behind it to Genesis 2?
- Jesus confirms and explains Deut 24 properly (against contemporary misunderstanding / abuse of it) and thereby gives an exhaustive account of marriage, divorce and remarriage?
- Jesus confirms and explains Deut 24 properly (against contemporary misunderstanding / abuse of it) but does not thereby give an exhaustive account of marriage, divorce and remarriage?
- How far should our reading of Jesus's answer depend upon our reading of contemporary rabbinic debates?

Is Jesus specifically and directly dealing with rabbinic debates and saying -"In regard to the 'matter indecency' in Deut 24, I agree with Shammai -this is 'serious sexual immorality' not -as Hillel says -'pretty much anything you like'. The only reason Deut 24 gives for divorce is serious sexual immorality."?

"The School of Shammai say, A man may not divorce his wife unless he has found in her aught improper, as it is said, *because he hath found some unseemly thing in her*. But the School of Hillel say, Even if she spoiled a dish for him, as it is said, *because he hath found some unseemly thing in her*." (*Mishnah*, Tractate Gittin, 9.10, q. Clyde Jones)

Is Jesus attacking easy divorce with a view to remarriage? Or is he attacking divorce as such?

DF reading of Matthew 19:

3 – tell us about divorce – go on, enter the Hillel-Shammai debate

4-6 – no, I'll reiterate the big important stuff from Gen 2

7 – yeah but what about Dt 24

8-9 rebuke and explanation

8 – rebuke – this was a regrettable provision introduced because of human sinfulness (general – not the hardness of heart of the potential divorcer! - that would be saying "because you wanted to do something bad God gave a rule to allow you to do it!")

9 – explanation – and if you want to know where I stand on Dt 24, I'm with Shammai – that's how you shd read it (though its permissive not mandatory)

10 – whoa, that's strict!

Objection and a possible answer:

Objection:

How can that work – it makes the exception clause – which Mark and Luke omit – the punchline? How would they omit the punchline?

Answer:

Dear X,

Many thanks for your thoughts about the exception clause - really, really helpful.

A word about procedure: I think that there are good reasons for holding my view of Matt 19. I am presented with what appears to be a very strong reason for abandoning it. My first action should be to try find ways of defending my view. This is not because I won't cheerfully abandon my view if I need to.

It's simply a sensible way to operate. That means that what follows is tentative and exploratory. I'm not saying, "this is the case" but "I wonder, does this help?"

There are some major differences between the accounts:

1) Luke 16.18 is an isolated saying and so, for our purposes, it may be discounted - there are no "punchline" issues about exception or not

2) Mark

- 10.2 does not have "for this cause"

- the statement about "whoever divorces ..." takes place outside of the conversation with the Pharisees

- the order of who says what is different in Mk and Matt

- there is no "whoa" statement from the disciples

SO how about something like this for a harmonization

a) Matthew - as I represented yesterday. The Pharisees have a conversation with Jesus about the meaning of Deut 24.1 (for any cause) which goes back and forth and the punchline for which is the exception clause. This leads to disciples' "whoa".

b) Mark - on the basis of the conversation which Matt reports, Mark gives us a two-paragraph pericope which summarizes Jesus's general stance on divorce but is not framed as a discussion of Dt 24.1.

- para 1 - the most important thing Jesus has to say on the matter is contained in 2-9, i.e. divorce is a way of dealing with sin, it shouldn't be like this, don't separate what God has joined (climax in Mk compared to a statement which leads to a further debate in Matt)

- para 2 - a Lk 16.18 type, self-contained statement from Jesus about divorce (which doesn't mention the exception clause because Mark wishes to use it to drive home the msg of this section - "don't divorce" whereas in Matthew its mentioned precisely because his is a section on the meaning of Dt 24.1).

c) in summary

- Matt uses what happened on this occasion and others to tell us both what Jesus thinks generally about marriage and divorce AND his specific contribution to the Dt 24.1 debate

- Mark uses what happened on this occasion and others to tell us just what Jesus thinks generally about marriage and divorce

I'd forgotten how very different the two accounts are and reckon the harmonization I've given as fairly plausible (I won't bring in arguments here from Matthaean priority because I might lose a hearer at that point!).

What do you think?

Blessings

David

b) Matthew 5.31-2, Matthew 19.3-12, Mark 10.10-12, Luke 16.18

i) are there exceptions or not?

- not to mention an exception is not the same thing as to deny it

ii) what is *porneia*?

- pre-marital immorality?

- incestuous marriage which should never have taken place?

- adultery?

- adultery and other illicit sexual immoralities?

- radical breaches of the covenant, principally though not exclusively of a sexual nature?

- equivalent to the 'indecent thing' of Deut 24?

iii) what does the exception clause apply to / mean?

i) Divorce - except for *porneia* - is adultery AND divorce and remarriage, w/o exception is adultery

- ii) Divorce and remarriage is adultery - except where the divorce is for *porneia*
- iv) how does divorcing on illegitimate grounds make the other an adulterer (Matt 5.32)?

i) because it is assumed she will remarry and yet she is still married to her former husband. Remarriage after invalid divorce is adultery.

Not only is it assumed that the divorced woman will remarry, it appears that the divorce certificate itself was framed in precisely this way. *Mishnah*, Tractate Gittin 9.3:

"The essential formula in the bill of divorce is, 'Lo, thou art free to marry any man' ." ("You are free to any man.")

ii) because it is counting her and treating her as an adulteress - divorced as though she were an adulteress although all she has actually done is burn the toast

7. Paul's teaching

a) Romans 7.1-6

- the concept of covenantal death
- free to remarry after death
- free to remarry after own death !

b) I Corinthians 7

8-9 - it's good to be unmarried

10-11 - but if you 're married, don't get divorced

the "separate" and "divorce" words are equivalent (*chōrizō* / *aphiēmi*)

- a) parallelism of vv.10-11
- b) note that both men (v .11) and women (v 13) can divorce
- c) vv.12-13 - divorce and "consent to live with"

the "unmarried" word (*agamos*) is used for

- a) those who have never married v.8
- b) the marital status of the divorcee v.11

why stay unmarried? (or be reconciled?)

this is two believers and the likelihood/desirability of reconciliation is much higher than in a mixed marriage

so is remarriage forbidden in this circumstance?

("let her remain unmarried" - *menetō agamos*) by analogy with 8-9, possibly not

12-14 - and don't divorce your unbelieving partner

15 - but if your unbelieving partner divorces you, OK, you 're free

- "free" - a reference to the divorce certificate - i.e free to remarry
- compare to v39 (though a different word) -free = free to remarry
- the v39 word also in v27 – are you bound to a wife – do not seek to be free, are you free from a wife, do not seek a wife?
- in terms of the flow of the passage, 15b is parenthetical

- why the difference between v 11 - don't remarry and v15 - free to remarry?
 - the likelihood and desirability of reconciliation

- if you are free to remarry after the divorce of v.15 then
 - either Jesus's teaching was not meant to be exhaustive
 - or somehow this (irremediable desertion on religious grounds) is a divorce for *porneia*
 - that is to say, does Paul give us a ground for divorce which Jesus has not?
If so, what is the significance of that?
- what about believers deserting believers?
 - Believer A deserts believer B
 - the church requires reconciliation / return
 - Believer A refuses
 - at which point this person falls under discipline and is "treated as an unbeliever" in any case - Matthew 18.15-17

8. Are these passages exhaustive or instructive?

- is there a generalizable definition of legitimate grounds for divorce? (e.g. Clyde Jones's "wilful and radical violation of the marriage covenant"). Why would we seek one?
- what about capital crimes where sentence not executed -i.e. where the guilty party is 'covenantally' or 'judicially' dead and the innocent party therefore 'judicially' widowed?
Theodore Mackin, re Byzantine Church: "But the adultery warranting dismissal and dissolution was understood to be not the only cause, but to be only a sample and a point of departure for other and equivalent causes. It was taken as self-evident that other crimes are possible to spouses that injure their marriages with equal or greater severity. Abortion and attempted murder of the spouse were only two of these." (quoted by Clyde Jones, pp.188- 9)
- response to physical / emotional abuse? (threefold response to tyrants -complaint, flight, armed resistance)
- is there room for such a concept as 'constructive separation / abuse' parallel with schism and dismissal from employment as analogies? would this fall under "does not consent to live with"? and, again, would that irremediable desertion constitute grounds for divorce?
- what would the "resurrection" of the guilty party mean after their covenantal death?
 - remember that not all temporal consequences of our sin are reversed by repentance (cut off arm)
 - by analogy, such "resurrection" will presumably involve:
 - conversion to Christ -sorrow for sin
 - readiness to obey God's commands however costly
 - sincere endeavours to achieve reconciliation and make reparation
 - willingness to be patient and submit to counsel

9. Summary with additional notes

1. Marriage is a covenant relationship which God intends to be lifelong
2. When the terms of the covenant are broken by a "divorce-worthy" sin then the 'innocent' party may forgive and carry on or may divorce
3. Divorce would mean the innocent party handing over a certificate which God gives them and which says "you have committed divorce-worthy sin and are thus, in respect of this marriage, liable to death" to the guilty party
4. These certificates are only available for what God reckons to be divorce-worthy sins and amount to a statement from God to the innocent party, "you can treat him as though he were dead and you can act as though he were dead"
5. When certificates do the rounds which have other "grounds" for divorce on them, then they are forgeries
6. The guilty party is passive in this – he cannot initiate a divorce, nor does he have the power to end a marriage against the will of the innocent party
7. Divorce is not a sin but a God-given way of dealing with sin

8. After a legitimate divorce, the innocent party may remarry
9. Remarriage after an illegitimate divorce is adultery
10. Divorce-worthy sins include
 - i. serious sexual infidelity
 - ii. irremediable desertion
 - iii. gross violation of the marital obligations of Exodus 21
 - iv. capital crimes
11. While there is the possibility of reconciliation, a Christian who has divorced from another Christian should not remarry
12. There *may* be cases of “resurrection” where the guilty party in a divorce or those who were divorced illegitimately are permitted to remarry. On the same basis, illegitimately contracted marriage relationships may be put on a new footing.

10. Further reading

- Jay Adams - *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, 1980
- Greg Bahnsen – *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, pp.97-116, 1984
- Andrew Cornes - *Divorce and Remarriage*, 1993, rev.ed. 2002
- William Heth and Gordon Wenham - *Jesus and Divorce*, 1984
- William Heth – “Jesus on Divorce: How My Mind Has Changed” - SBJT, 6.1, (Spring 2002) and at <http://www.sbts.edu/resources/sbjt/2002/Spring2.pdf>
- Wayne House (ed.) - *Divorce and Remarriage - Four Views* 1990
- David Instone-Brewer - *Divorce and Remarriage in the 1st and 21st Century*, 2001 (and resources at <http://www.Instone-Brewer.com>)
- David Clyde Jones - *Biblical Christian Ethics*, 1994
- John Murray - *Divorce*, 1961
- John Piper - *Divorce and Remarriage: A Position Paper* - <http://www.desiringGod.org>
- Alan Storkey - *Marriage and its Modern Crisis* 1996
- John Stott - *New Issues Facing Christians Today*, 1999
- Ray Sutton - *Second Chance*, 1988

11. Some of the texts

Genesis 2.24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Exodus 21.7-11 ⁷When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. ⁸If she does not please her master, who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed; he shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt unfairly with her. ⁹If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter. ¹⁰If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish the food, clothing, or marital rights of the first wife. ¹¹And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out without debt, without payment of money.

Leviticus 21.14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, a prostitute, these he shall not marry.

Leviticus 22.12-13 If a priest’s daughter marries a layman, she shall not eat of the offering of the sacred donations; but if a priest’s daughter is widowed or divorced, without offspring, and returns to her father’s house, as in her youth, she may eat of her father’s food. No lay person shall eat of it.

Deuteronomy 24.1-4 Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; she then leaves his house ² and goes off to become another man’s wife. ³Then suppose the second man dislikes her, writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house (or the second man who married her dies); ⁴ her first husband, who sent her away, is not

permitted to take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that would be abhorrent to the LORD, and you shall not bring guilt on the land that the LORD your God is giving you as a possession.

Ezra 10.11, 14 ¹¹ Now make confession to the LORD the God of your ancestors, and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives." ... ¹⁴ Let our officials represent the whole assembly, and let all in our towns who have taken foreign wives come at appointed times, and with them the elders and judges of every town, until the fierce wrath of our God on this account is averted from us."

Proverbs 2.17 ¹⁶ You will be saved from the loose woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, ¹⁷ who forsakes the partner of her youth and forgets her sacred covenant;

Isaiah 50.1 (see also 54.1-6) Thus says the LORD:

Where is your mother's bill of divorce with which I put her away?

Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?

No, because of your sins you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was put away.

Jeremiah 3.8 (see 1-22) She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce; yet her false sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.

Ezekiel 16, 23

Hosea 2.2 ² Plead with your mother, plead— for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband— that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts,

Malachi 2.14-16 (see also vv 10-11) ¹³ And this you do as well: You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand. ¹⁴ You ask, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was a witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵ Did not one God make her? Both flesh and spirit are his. And what does the one God desire? Godly offspring. So look to yourselves, and do not let anyone be faithless to the wife of his youth. ¹⁶ For I hate divorce, says the LORD, the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless.

Malachi 2.16 – ESV – For the man who hates and divorces, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit and do not be faithless.

Matthew 1.19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

Matthew 5.31-32 ³¹ "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³² But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Matthew 19.3-12 ³ Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?" ⁴ He answered, "Have you not read that the one who made them at 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. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." ⁷ They said to him, "Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?" ⁸ He said to them, "It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery." ¹⁰ His disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." ¹¹ But he said to them, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. ¹² For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

Mark 10.10-12 ¹⁰ Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹ He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Luke 16.18 "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

Romans 7.1-4 Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? ² Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. ³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is

alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress. ⁴ In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵ While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

I Cor 6.15-17 ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." ¹⁷ But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

I Cor 7.8-16 ⁸ To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. ⁹ But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion. ¹⁰ To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife should not separate from her husband ¹¹ (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. ¹² To the rest I say—I and not the Lord—that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. ¹³ And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. ¹⁶ Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.

I Cor 7.32-40 ³⁶ If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his fiancée, if his passions are strong, and so it has to be, let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry. ³⁷ But if someone stands firm in his resolve, being under no necessity but having his own desire under control, and has determined in his own mind to keep her as his fiancée, he will do well. ³⁸ So then, he who marries his fiancée does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better. ³⁹ A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ But in my judgment she is more blessed if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.