

“LET THEM MARRY”

INTRODUCTION

This lesson was requested recently. Because it has been a few years since we dealt with this topic directly, it makes sense to revisit it now.

I. THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER MARRIED ARE ELIGIBLE

- A. **Genesis 2:18-24** *“And Jehovah God said, ‘**It is not good that man should be alone**; I will make him a helper comparable to him.’ Out of the ground Jehovah God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which Jehovah God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and **they shall become one flesh.**”*

God created marriage in the beginning to solve the problem of human loneliness. It is implicitly intended for all.

- B. **1st Corinthians 7:1-9** *“Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with*

consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment. For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

While celibacy may be prudent in some situations, marriage provides the primary way of escape (1st Corinthians 10:13) from sexual temptations.

- C. **Hebrews 13:4** *"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."*

Every person is free to marry at least once.

- D. **1st Timothy 4:1-3** *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and **doctrines of demons**, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, **forbidding to marry**, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth."*

Forbidding to marry, generally, is a departure from faith correctly identified as a demonic doctrine.

II. THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WIDOWED ARE ELIGIBLE

- A. **1st Corinthians 7:39** *"A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord."*

In a passage that addresses sexual morality and marriage directly and at length, the apostle Paul clearly states that widows are at liberty to marry again.

- B. Romans 7:1-3** *"The woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. 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."*

In this text, marriage is an analogy for the two covenants. Nevertheless, the analogy is meaningless without a basis in reality. Therefore, the statement is valid for showing that widows are eligible for remarriage.

- C. 1st Timothy 5:14** *"I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully."*

Within the context of a widow qualifying for a church's daily distribution, Paul said that it is better for a young widow to find a new husband. By "young", he meant those under 60 (9).

III. THOSE WHO HAVE DIVORCED FORNICATORS ARE ELIGIBLE

- A. 1st Corinthians 7:10-11** *"Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife."*

1. The first rule is that divorce is prohibited.
2. The contingency is that if that sin has already been committed, there are two options:
 - a. Celibacy and singlehood, or
 - b. Reconciliation.

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

Beyond forbidding divorce, Jesus asserted that subsequent marriage is adultery. This is the underlying principle by which we must approach the topic of divorce.

- C. **Matthew 19:9** *"Whoever divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."*

Whereas Luke quotes Jesus stating the rule, Matthew quotes Him presenting that exact same rule while also including its exception. One is free to divorce a spouse who is guilty of fornication. It is true that the exception proves the rule, meaning that if this is the only authorized exception to Jesus' rule about marriage and divorce, then there are no others. No one may rightly presume upon God, expecting Him to approve of additional exemptions.

- D. **Matthew 19:3-9** *"The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?' And He answered and said to them, 'Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning "made them male and female," 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"? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.' They said to Him, 'Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?' He said to them, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.'"*

Matthew also provides the context in which Jesus presented this statement.

1. He was answering a direct question, so there is no doubt He was condemning "divorce for just any reason" (3).

2. He expected His audience to be familiar with God's intent when He established marriage, making two into one (4-6). Breaking apart what God put together cannot be good. This is why reconciliation is preferred when divorce has already happened.
3. Jesus' inquisitors asked about the relevance of the Law of Moses and He explained to them that God was merely being permissive under the former covenant, specifically because of hard hearts, but that was never God's design (7-8).

E. **Matthew 5:31-32** *"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."*

Earlier, the Lord had stated the exact same rule with precisely the same exception and its presentation was couched in terms of contrast against the Old Covenant.

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

What Jesus said about divorce and subsequent marriage is applicable to men and women alike.

G. **Mark 6:17-18** *"Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.'"*

Notice that it is possible to be married to someone else's wife! God does not condone every marriage.

IV. NOT ALL WHO ARE FREE TO MARRY OUGHT TO MARRY

- A. **1st Corinthians 7:32-35** *"I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife. There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction."*

Marriage is a major responsibility and so is discipleship. Not everyone can manage those two duties simultaneously.

- B. **1st Corinthians 8:9** *"Beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak."*
- 1st Corinthians 9:12** *"We have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ."*
- 1st Corinthians 10:23-24** *"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being."*
- 1st Corinthians 10:32-33** *"Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."*

A right exercised to the detriment of another's soul becomes a wrong. If a person has proven, through multiple failed marriages, that they are ill-suited for that blessed union, then choosing to marry would be setting a stumbling block in front of the next spouse.

- C. **Matthew 18:3-6** *"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name*

receives Me. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Without ever committing fornication themselves, one spouse may tempt the other to be unfaithful in the marriage by causing domestic strife.

1. **Proverbs 21:9** *"Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman."*
2. **Proverbs 12:4** *"An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones."*
3. **Proverbs 19:13** *"The contentions of a wife are a continual dripping."*
4. **Proverbs 17:1** *"Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife."*
5. **Proverbs 11:29** *"He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart."*
6. **Proverbs 30:21-23** *"For three things the earth is perturbed, yes, for four it cannot bear up: For a servant when he reigns, a fool when he is filled with food, **a hateful woman when she is married**, and a maidservant who succeeds her mistress."*
7. **Proverbs 14:1** *"The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish pulls it down with her hands."*

D. Matthew 19:9-12 *"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.' His disciples said to Him, 'If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.' But He said to them, 'All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it.'"*

Jesus said that some folks need to be eunuchs, effectively functioning as emasculated men, for the sake of God's kingdom. Not everyone is suited for marriage.