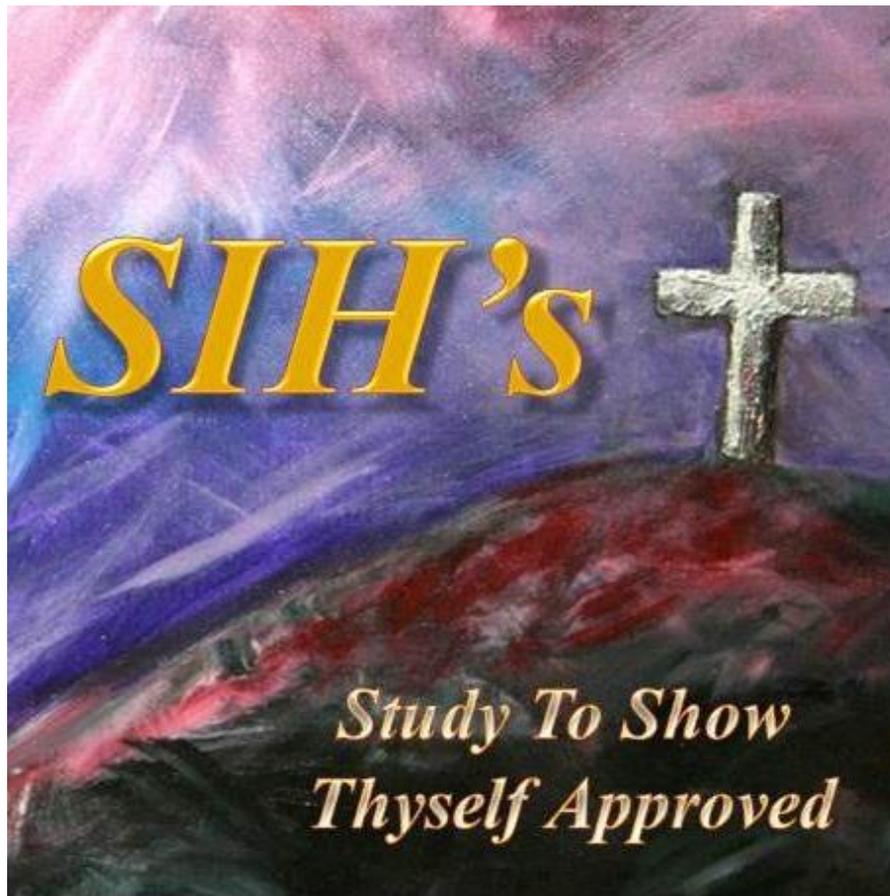


Settled In Heaven's

Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage

Harmonizing The Old and New Testament Scriptures



Robert Barkman

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“Marriage”

Mal 2:13-16 (KJV)

13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [*iē*] with good will at your hand. 14) Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [*is*] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [*one*] covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

As one of the most important institutions that the Lord established, marriage is a very important subject that Christians need to understand and honor. In this series we will be looking at:

1. What we need to know about marriage to understand divorce.
2. The definition, allowance and purpose of divorce and allowance of remarriage.
3. The Biblical grounds for divorce (fornication).
4. The Biblical grounds for divorce (loss of favour).
5. The Biblical grounds for divorce (departure).
6. A Summary Of Our Study and Closing Thoughts

Please understand, for this study we will only be looking at information that is pertinent to the subject of marriage and divorce. Since marriage and the family is such a large subject we cannot begin to cover all aspects of the marriage union in this study. Therefore, other subjects concerning marriage will be covered at another time.

Also, this series of blog postings do not begin to cover every verse in the Bible that touches on the subject of marriage and divorce. To try to cover all the verses involving marriage and divorce would lead to a multi-part posting of maybe 40 or 50 parts. I have books on marriage and divorce that are well over 200 pages long. So, once again, please understand I will be covering just a few representative verses on this subject to cover the basic principles concerning marriage and divorce.

If, after the series is completed you have questions about any individual verse I have not covered I'll be glad to answer, to the best of my ability, any question you may have. Please feel free to ask them in a comment on the blog or by email at settledinheaven@gmail.com

Also, for those who have questions about same sex-marriage, please see my blog posting entitled "Same-Sex Marriage: What does the Bible say?" for a more complete study on that subject.

Let's begin our study by looking at what we need to know about marriage to understand the Biblical teachings on divorce.

THE SCRIPTURES:

Mal 2:14; Gen 2:21-24; Eph 5:25-29; Gen 2:18-20

THE STUDY:

What do we need to know about marriage to understand the Bible's teachings on divorce?

What is marriage?

Lets' begin our study by looking at Malachi 2:14, here, we find the nature of the marital union being described...

Mal 2:14 - Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

What is marriage?

1. It is a covenant relationship between the marital couple. In other words, marriage is a covenant (or a promise, or a contract) that is made between the marital parties. The groom promises the bride that he will do certain things for her and the wife promises the husband she will do certain things for him.
2. The Lord is the witness to the covenant that is established between the man and the wife. In other words, the Lord sees that the covenant is made and will hold both parties responsible to keep the marital agreement. Although He is not a party to the agreement, because He is a

witness to the agreement He can enforce the agreement and punish those who do not keep the agreement.

If we understand that marriage is a covenant relationship between fallen human beings, we also can know that it is a conditional covenant. In other words, covenants made between men, because of their sinful, fallen condition can be broken. If men were sinless the marital covenant would be kept perfectly and remain enforce until death. But because men are fallen, at times the marital covenant is broken. This is the reason why divorce is allowed. If it were impossible to break the marital covenant there could be no divorce under any circumstances.

Let's look at another set of verses that expand on the nature of the marital covenant in Gen 2:21-24...

Gen 2:21-24 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; (22) And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (23) 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. (24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Here the marital union is said to be:

a cleaving – to be bound together, to be joined – this describes the TYPE of relationship

1. they are bound together as if they are now one
2. they are to look upon each other as if they are themselves
3. therefore by helping their spouse they are helping themselves
4. therefore what affects their spouse will affect them
5. therefore they will be sharing every aspect of their life with each other

a one flesh relationship – united persons, unified being – this describes the RESULT of the union...

1. it is the joining of two individuals into one cohesive unit
2. they are to be united in spiritual beliefs
3. they are to be united emotionally
4. they are to be united in purpose
5. they are to be united in presence
6. they are to be united physically
7. they are to be united in concerns of life

8. they are to united in goals
9. they are to united in desires

Please notice all the above clearly indicates that the marital union was MEANT to be a permanent union. However, there is nothing in the above that says that the marital union IS permanent...

Mat 19:3-9 ... (5) 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? (6) Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (7) They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? (8) He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so....

Although God desires for the marital union to be permanent, the marital covenant can be brought to an end. In the above verses He does not say "man cannot put asunder", he says "let not man put asunder" In other words, although the marital union SHOULD NOT BE broken it CAN BE broken.

What are the basic obligations of a marital covenant?

The obligations of a marital covenant are similar, but not identical, between men and women. The man's duties in the marital covenant are summarized in Eph 5:25-29...

Eph 5:25-29 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (26) That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (27) 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. (28) So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (29) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

If we summarize the above verses we see a three-fold obligation that is placed upon the man in the marital covenant:...

to love – self-sacrificial love –

1. he is to be willing to sacrifice himself for her wellbeing
2. he is to constantly put her first ALWAYS working for her good even at his expense

to nourish – to pamper, to protect, to allow to mature and grow –

1. he is to care for her physical needs (food, clothing, shelter)
2. he is to work towards her growth and maturity spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically by helping her to achieve her goals and desires
3. he is to help her thrive

to cherish – to brood and supply warmth –

1. he is to meet her needs of physical and emotional intimacy,
2. he is to watch over and protect her physically and through counsel and service
3. he is to be physically present with her (how else can he meet her intimacy needs and protect her?)
4. he is to not abuse her physically or emotionally (how can he protect her if he is abusing her? How can he help her to thrive if he is abusing her? How can he love her sacrificially if he is abusing her?)
5. he is to protect her reputation and public testimony
6. he is to honor her as a weaker vessel

(Other verses that establish the above: Ex 21:10-11, 1 Cor 7:1-6, Deut 22:13-21, 1 Pet 3:7)

The woman's duties in the marital covenant are summarized in Gen 2:18-20...

Gen 2:18-20 **And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. (19) And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. (20) And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.***

As we study the above verses we can see two main obligations placed upon the woman in the marital covenant....

To be a "help meet" for the man – to correspond with, to fulfill, to meet shortcomings, to be suitable

1. To fulfill areas of shortcoming. Where husband is weak she is to step in and meet needs.
2. To have complimentary abilities and talents. She does what her husband is unable to do
3. To love her husband and family (shown by her submission and reverence)
4. To be willing to sacrifice herself for the benefit of her family and husband

To be a companion for the man (to eliminate his being alone) – to be at ones side, to stand together with, to serve alongside, to aid:

1. To be intimate physically and emotionally
2. To be physically present (How can she be at his side if she is not physically present.)
3. Recognize husband's position of responsibility before God for actions of entire family. To work in harmony to bring about God's will in the entire family.

---She will be submissive to the husband's requests to obey the Lord in her life and her children's lives. She will not be submissive to her husband's requests that would lead her to go against the Lord's will for herself or her family.

---She will lead a modest life desiring for her life to draw attention to her Lord and not herself.

To be unified in desires with her husband

1. She is to work towards his growth and maturity spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically by helping him to achieve his goals and desires
2. She is to watch over and protect him through counsel and supportive actions
3. She is to not abuse him physically or emotionally (how can she protect him and aid him through abuse? How can she love him sacrificially if she is abusing him?)
4. She is to protect his reputation and public testimony

(Other verses that establish the above:1 Cor 7:1-6, Eph 5:22-23, 33, 1 Ptr 3:1-6)

SUMMARY:

What we have seen so far can be summarized as follows:

1. Marriage is a covenant relationship
2. The parties of the covenant are the husband and wife
3. God is the witness to the making of the covenant, He is not a party in the covenant
4. God as witness will hold each party accountable to keep their vows
5. Marriage is described as a "cleaving" and a "one-flesh" relationship
6. Both of these descriptions imply a closeness, unity and intimacy between the couple
7. The marriage union SHOULD NOT BE broken by man but CAN BE broken by man.
8. Man's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "to love, nourish, cherish"
9. Woman's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "a help meet, a companion"

As we continue our study we need to try to remember the above points about marriage. In our next lesson we will be looking at God's teachings on divorce.

“Divorce & Remarriage”

Mal 2:13-16 (KJV)

13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [*it*] with good will at your hand. 14) Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [*is*] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [*one*] covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

As one of the most important institutions that the Lord established, marriage is a very important subject that Christians need to understand and honor. In this series we will be looking at:

1. What we need to know about marriage to understand divorce.
2. The definition, allowance and purpose of divorce and allowance of remarriage.
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4. The Biblical grounds for divorce (loss of favour).
5. The Biblical grounds for divorce (departure).
6. A Summary Of Our Study and Closing Thoughts

What does the Bible mean when it speaks of divorce?

Does God allow divorce?

If God allows divorce, what is His purpose in this allowance?

Does God allow remarriage following divorce?

Folks, these are very important and, in some ways, complicated questions that we are about to attempt to answer. For some, our beliefs have been based upon a personal study of God’s Word and we have become convinced of our beliefs by the Holy Spirit. It is to this group that I have a great deal of respect as you have sought to come to your conclusions based upon the Word and the leading of the holy Spirit.

There are many others who have simply accepted what they have heard taught about this complicated subject and have accepted the teachings of man without ever searching the Scriptures and becoming convinced of their beliefs by the indwelling Spirit of God. To this group I would like to send a friendly reminder... we are all responsible to study these things on our own. If we are saved and, therefore, have the Spirit of God within us we have the

ability to understand these truths and be assured of their validity **“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost.”** 2Pet 1:20-21 (KJV)

It is of this spirit that I begin this study on this very difficult subject. It is not to attempt to persuade anyone of my beliefs. It is only to share with you what I believe God’s Word teaches us, with an understanding that you will pursue your own study of this subject and, through the leadership of the Spirit, come to your own convictions on this subject. My one plea is for you to not continue to accept anyone’s beliefs (including my own) without doing your own, personal, study of this subject.

Far too often this subject has been confused and perverted, causing some to believe that which is not true. There can only be one set of teachings that are true. The existence of many different views on this subject proves that there is much false teaching that is being accepted as truth.

Let’s continue our study by attempting to answer some of the questions we have posed in the beginning paragraphs of this introduction. I will be answering these questions as simply as possible by making reference to Bible verses and allowing them to speak for themselves.

THE SCRIPTURES:

**Deut 24 1-4; Mal 2:13-16; Matt 5:27-32; Matt 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12;
Luke 16:18; 1Cor 7:10-16; 1Cor 7:39-40**

THE STUDY:

QUESTION - What does the Bible mean when it speaks of divorce?

The Bible uses several different terms to describe divorce:

1. Divorcement - This term helps us to understand that the divorce is the act of destroying, or removing the marital covenant resulting in the covenant being rendered void and going out of existence. Note some of the meanings of this term are : to destroy, to consume, and to remove.

OT – kirythuwth – to cut off, to destroy, to consume - Deu 24:1,3; Isa 50:1

NT – apostasion – to separate, to remove, to withdrawl - Matt 5:31; Matt 19:7; Mark 10:4

2. To put away – This term helps us to understand that once a divorce occurs each party is relieved of the obligations of that covenant. Note some of the definitions of the term in relationship to the marital covenant... the covenant is “withdrawn”, the covenantal responsibilities are “forsaken” and “sent away”, the covenant is “undone”, “laid aside”, and “plucked away”. The parties of the covenant are “loosed” from their responsibilities to fulfill the covenant. They are “pardoned” in the sense of released from further obligation. They are given “leave” of their obligations.

OT - yatsa' – to go out, to come out, to depart, to withdrawl, - Ezra 10:3, 19;

OT – shalach – to send away, to leave, to depart, to forsake - Isa 50:1; Jer 3:1;

OT – cuwr – to turn off, to lay aside, to be undone, to pluck away - Jer 4:1

NT – apoluo – to release, to loose, to pardon, to depart - Matt 5:31,32,19:3,8,9; Mark 2:10,11,12; Luke 16:18,

NT – aphiemi – to send forth, to forgive, to omit, to leave - 1 Cor 7:11

3. To put asunder – This term helps us to see that a divorce is placing a separation between the parties of the covenant. Because the covenant is destroyed the relationship between the parties no longer exists... they are now “separated” from one another. Before they were “united” and now they are “pulled apart” and “room is placed between them”.

OT – None

NT – chorizo – to pull apart, to separate, to place room between - Matt 19:6, Mark 10:9

4. To send out – This term used to express the act of the divorcer against the divorcee. The one who decides the divorce (whether scriptural or not) is the one who is “pushing away” their spouse, they are “departing” from their spouse, it is as if they are “shooting out their spouse” from the relationship to which they had entered.

OT – shalach – to send away, to send out, to push away, to let depart, to shoot out - Deut 24:1,3

ANSWER: *Based upon our look at the terms for the act of divorce in the Bible we can find a very simple, yet, important definition for “divorce”....*

Scripturally, divorce is the declaration that a marital covenant has been destroyed resulting in the removal of the obligations of the covenant and a separation of the parties who had been united by the covenant. This act of divorce is based upon the actions and decisions of the parties of the covenant bringing upon them the responsibility for the rupturing of the marital union.

QUESTION – Does God allow divorce?

Due to Loss of Favour

Deut 24

1) When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give [it] in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2) And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's [wife]. 3) And [if] the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth [it] in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her [to be] his wife; 4) Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that [is] abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance.

Due to Fornication

Matt 5:27-32 (KJV)

27) Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28) But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29) And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30) And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. 31) It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32) 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.

(Matt 19:3-9, Mark 10:3-12)

Due to Departure

1Cor 7:10-16 (KJV)

10) And unto the married I command, [yet] not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from [her] husband: 11) But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or

be reconciled to [*her*] husband: and let not the husband put away [*his*] wife. 12) But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13) And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14) For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15) But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such [*cases*]: but God hath called us to peace. 16) For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save [*thy*] husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save [*thy*] wife?

ANSWER: *Based upon the above verses, in both Testaments, we find that divorce is allowed in some cases. Those cases are "uncleanness", "fornication", and "departure"*

QUESTION: *- What is God's purpose in allowing divorce?*

Matt 19:3-9 (KJV) – hardness of heart allowed

3) The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4) And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [*them*] at the beginning made them male and female, 5) 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? 6) Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7) They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8) He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9) 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.

(Mark 10:3-12)

Deut 24 hardness of heart – Loss Of Favor Hate Her –

1) When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give [it] in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2) And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's [wife]. 3) And [if] the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth [it] in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her [to be] his wife; 4) Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that [is] abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance.

Mal 2:13-16 (KJV) hardness of heart - dealt treacherously

13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [it] with good will at your hand. 14) Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [is] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [one] covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

***ANSWER:** God allows divorce to protect the hated party of the marital agreement from abuse and mistreatment due to the hardness (hatred) of a spouse's heart. Malachi describes this as "dealing treacherously" with a person's spouse.*

***QUESTION:** - Does God allow remarriage following divorce?*

Deut 24:1-4 – she may go and be another man's wife

1) When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give [it] in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2) And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's [wife]. 3) And [if] the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth [it] in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if

the latter husband die, which took her [*to be*] his wife; 4) Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that [*is*] abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [*for*] an inheritance.

Matt 5:28-32 – let him give her a writing of divorcement.... That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery

28) But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29) And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [*it*] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [*that*] thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30) And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [*it*] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [*that*] thy whole body should be cast into hell. 31) It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32) 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.

(Matt 19:3-9)

1Cor 7:10-16 (KJV) - a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

10) And unto the married I command, [*yet*] not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from [*her*] husband: 11) But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to [*her*] husband: and let not the husband put away [*his*] wife. 12) But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13) And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14) For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15) But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such [*cases*]: but God hath called us to peace. 16) For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save [*thy*] husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save [*thy*] wife?

ANSWER: *In both Testaments, the Lord allows for remarriage following divorce in the cases of "loss of favour", "fornication" and "departure".*

As we can clearly see, to understand the Bible teachings concerning divorce and remarriage we must come to an understanding of the Biblical grounds of "loss of favour", "fornication" and "departure". As we continue our study we will be looking at which each one involves by taking a more detailed look at several of the passages we have referenced in this study.

SUMMARY:

What we have seen so far can be summarized as follows:

In lesson #1

1. Marriage is a covenant relationship
2. The parties of the covenant are the husband and wife
3. God is the witness to the making of the covenant, He is not a party in the covenant
4. God as witness will hold each party accountable to keep their vows
5. Marriage is described as a "cleaving" and a "one-flesh" relationship
6. Both of these descriptions imply a closeness, unity and intimacy between the couple
7. The marriage union SHOULD NOT BE broken by man but CAN BE broken by man.
8. Man's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "to love, nourish, cherish"
9. Woman's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "a help meet, a companion"

In lesson #2:

1. Divorce is the act of sundering the marital covenant making it void. The guilty parties of the covenant are held responsible.
2. Divorce is allowed in cases of "loss of favour", "fornication", or "departure"
3. God allows divorce to protect the innocent party from abuse and mistreatment.
4. God allows for remarriage in the case of "loss of favour", "fornication" and "departure"

As we continue our study, we need to try to remember the above points about marriage and divorce. In our next lesson we will be continuing to look at God's teachings on divorce.

“Grounds For Divorce: Fornication”

Mal 2:13-16 (KJV)

13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [*it*] with good will at your hand. 14) Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [*is*] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [*one*] covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

As one of the most important institutions that the Lord established, marriage is a very important subject that Christians need to understand and honor. In this series we will be looking at:

1. What we need to know about marriage to understand divorce.
2. The definition, allowance and purpose of divorce and allowance of remarriage.
3. The Biblical grounds for divorce (fornication).
4. The Biblical grounds for divorce (loss of favour).
5. The Biblical grounds for divorce (departure).
6. A Summary Of Our Study and Closing Thoughts

In the following two passages we find that Christ, Himself, is giving us teaching on Scriptural grounds for divorce....

Matt 5:27-32

27) Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28) But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29) And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [*it*] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [*that*] thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30) And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [*it*] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [*that*] thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31) It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32) 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.

Matt 19:3-9

3) The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4) And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [*them*] at the beginning made them male and female,

5) 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?

6) Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7) They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8) He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9) 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.

Let's continue our study by looking at what is meant by Christ's phrase "fornication" to understand the Biblical teachings on marriage, divorce and remarriage.

THE SCRIPTURES:

Matt 5:27-32; Matt 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18

THE STUDY:

First of all, lets take a few moments to study how the term "fornication" is used throughout the Bible...

The term that is translated "fornication" in both the Matthew texts is the Greek word "porneia". This word is used throughout the NT Scriptures.

The definition of "porneia"

Lord fornication – indulging in or controlled by unclean passions, desires, lusts
(Note: Our word pornography comes from the Greek words "porneia" and "grapho". This term means writings that indulge in or are controlled by unclean desires, passions or lusts)

The use of "porneia" throughout the NT:

Submission to unclean sexual desires through sinful unions

John 8:41 – sex outside of marriage

1 Cor 5:1 – incest

1 Cor 6:15-18, Mat 21:31-32, Luke 15:30, – prostitution

1 Cor 7:2 – adultery (relations involving a married person transferring affections to someone other than spouse.)

Submission to other unclean bodily desires resulting partaking of things forbidden and addictions

1 Cor 6:13 – bodily partaking of forbidden things (habit forming things)

1 Thess 4:3-5 – concupiscence – burning with longings (any lusts of flesh)

Submission to unclean religious desires by worshipping false Gods

Rev 2:20-22 – Temple prostitution

Rev 2:14, 20, Rev 17: 1 Cor 10:8 & Num 25:1-9 – idolatry

Submission to unclean desires for power/wealth by making sinful political unions

Rev 18:3-9, 14:8; 17: – sinful union (submission) between Mystery Babylon and nations & unabated sinful desires/actions (idolatry)

Based on the above, according to Christ, fornication is a legitimate grounds for divorce.

Fornication is the fulfilling sinful desires resulting in unclean actions. In every case, as shown

above, these are all acts of selfishness and in many cases, the forsaking of Godly responsibilities for selfish gain/pleasure.

In the context of our study this would include:

1. Unclean sexual unions
2. Also, following selfish, unclean desires resulting in the forsaking of the responsibilities ...in this case, it would be responsibilities of the marriage covenant.

Please note Christ did not use the term "adultery" (Grk-moichos) - this refers to an unclean sexual affection/desire for a person other than a spouse. If He had this would limit our study to a sexual union only.

However, He said "fornication" which is a much broader term describing submission to many types of unclean desires, as we have seen. Based upon this it is not correct to limit the meaning of fornication to a sexual desire only.

Next, let's look specifically at the verses where Christ speaks of "fornication" as grounds for adultery...

The first teaching on divorce by Christ took place as a part of the Sermon on the Mount...

Mat 5:28-32

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

When a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already transferred his affections from his wife to this other woman. He has not acted out on that transferal, but it has taken place in his heart.

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

To emphasize the seriousness of this subject (the breaking of the marital covenant by transferring affections from a spouse to another person) the Lord uses two principles:

1. It is better to lose an eye or a hand than to commit this sin.

2. This sin is said to be punishable by an eternity in hell. In other words, this is a sin that is so great it characterizes the lifestyle of the lost. When a professing Christian commits this sin it immediately brings their very salvation into question.

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

Here the Lord is referring to the customs of the OT Jews who had liberalized the grounds of divorce to make it allowable on any grounds. Basically the Lord is saying, "It's being taught that, whoever wants to divorce their wife, as long as they give her proof of her divorce, God allows it to be done."

In this example, the man lusting after the woman (vs38) would have been allowed a divorce based upon simply wanting to "get rid of her", even though she had done nothing to deserve the rejection. The Lord is refuting that teaching....

But I say unto you,

The Lord now corrects the common teaching of the day to bring it back to the Scriptural teaching that existed from the days of Moses.

That whosoever shall put away his wife,

If the adulterous husband who is lusting after another woman (vs 38) divorces his wife

saving for the cause of fornication,

Divorce is not acceptable in the Lord's sight unless the sin of fornication is committed. It is only when a person forsakes the responsibilities of the marital covenant by submitting to his fleshly passions that a divorce is allowed.

The Lord is reminding us that the divorce we are speaking of is not lawful, due to the fact it is based on this man's lust for another woman (vs 38). Since his wife has not committed fornication, the husband is in the wrong for divorcing her.

causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

The man who is illicitly divorcing his wife is also causing the woman (vs 38) he is lusting after to be a partner in his adultery. This rule would apply whether a man or a woman is divorcing their spouse. Their gender does not make a difference.

This teaching of Christ on divorce took place in direct response to the questioning of the Pharisees...

Mat 19:3-9:

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

The Pharisees are asking Christ about the very same issue that He had previously addressed in the Sermon on the Mount. A common teaching of the day was for divorce to be allowed for basically any reason that could be named. They were asking Christ if this was the proper interpretation of the OT law concerning divorce.

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 twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Christ then reminds them of the intimate union of the marital covenant and also the intent of God that the union be permanent. Keep in mind in our previous study, although the Lord desires for the covenant to be permanent, man due to sin can sunder the covenant. See lesson #1 on "Marriage".

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

The Pharisees argument continues... If the Lord desires for the marital covenant to be permanent why did Moses allow for divorce in the OT? They were referring to Moses allowance of divorce in Deut 24:. We will be looking at this allowance in detail in the next section of our study "Grounds For Divorce: Loss Of Favour"

Please note in Christ's response He will not deny that Moses allowed for divorce, nor does He claim to change Moses' teachings. He simply explains the motive behind the allowance and then CLARIFIES it...

He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Christ now explains that the reason behind the allowance for divorce was the hardness of man's heart toward their spouse. This would lead to spousal abuse and mistreatment (and sometimes death). So for the sake of the abused spouse, the Lord allows divorce.

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.

When a divorce takes place, motivated by a desire to marry another, that divorce is linked to an act of adultery as the affections of the husband is transferred from the wife to the other woman. The same holds true when the genders are reversed and it is a woman who commits adultery and is unlawfully divorced that marries another man.

(It is important to note that the phrase "which is put away" is the Greek word "apoluo". This refers to the woman who was in a condition of being loosed or free. She is currently "loosed" from her marital obligations. The phrase does not imply that she was the victim of the unjust divorce. See the parallel passage in Mark 10 that makes the meaning of this section very clear.)

Finally, let's look at the other teachings of Christ concerning divorce...

This is the same account as we have read about in Matt 19: in response to the Pharisees questioning...

Mar 10:2-12:

And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him.

Here, the Pharisees ask Christ about the existence of a lawful divorce. They did this not wanting to know the truth but to attempt to trip Him up, cause a mistake and find fault with Him.

And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

Christ then refers them back to the OT teachings of Moses found in Deut 24:. This will be covered in the next section of our study. By Christ referring them back to Moses, this legitimizes what Moses taught. Surely if Moses was in error, the Lord would not have asked the Pharisees to recall it and rehearse it.

And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

They acknowledged that Moses taught on the subject, but they implied He allowed divorce for any reason.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

The Lord tells them that the reason for the allowance was because of the hardness of men's hearts. This would lead to spousal abuse and mistreatment; therefore, to avoid abuse and suffering by those who were the innocent party, the divorce would be allowed.

But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

The Lord again emphasizes the importance of marriage, the one flesh nature of the relationship, and His desire for marriage to be a permanent relationship.

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Along with the declaration that God desires for the marital covenant to be permanent, He acknowledges that men can sunder this relationship.

And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery

Here, the Lord is approached by the disciples following His teachings to the Pharisees. He continues to clarify His teaching by explaining that when a man forsakes the marital covenant following his sinful desires to marry another woman, adultery is committed by Him. The same principle holds true when a wife forsakes the covenant to marry another man, she commits adultery against her original husband.

This is the same account as we have read about in Matt 19:, and Mark 10: in response to the Pharisees questioning...

Luke 16:18:

Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from [*her*] husband committeth adultery.

This is almost a word for word repeat of what Christ had said in Matt 19:9 (with the exception of the "fornication clause".) Once again the teaching remains the same. For the husband or the wife, if they chose to unlawfully divorce their spouse, in an attempt to marry another, they are guilty of adultery. Gender makes no difference.

It is important to remember that since the last three texts (Matt 19, Mark 10, Luke 16) are accounts of the same event, we must study all three together to come to a full understanding of what Christ taught during His lesson. If we are consistent with our study we will find that Mark 10:11-12 helps to clarify what the Lord was teaching in Matt 19:9 and Luke 16:18.

SUMMARY:

What we have seen so far can be summarized as follows:

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In lesson #1

1. Marriage is a covenant relationship
2. The parties of the covenant are the husband and wife
3. God is the witness to the making of the covenant, He is not a party in the covenant
4. God as witness will hold each party accountable to keep their vows
5. Marriage is described as a "cleaving" and a "one-flesh" relationship
6. Both of these descriptions imply a closeness, unity and intimacy between the couple
7. The marriage union SHOULD NOT BE broken by man but CAN BE broken by man.
8. Man's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "to love, nourish, cherish"
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In lesson #2:

1. Divorce is the act of sundering the marital covenant making it void. The guilty parties of the covenant are held responsible.
2. Divorce is allowed in cases of "loss of favour", "fornication", or "departure"
3. God allows divorce to protect the innocent party from abuse and mistreatment.
4. God allows for remarriage in the case of "loss of favour", "fornication" and "departure"

In lesson #3:

1. The Lord teaches us that divorce is allowed by God when fornication takes place.
2. "Fornication" is the fulfilling sinful desires resulting in unclean actions and forsaking of God given responsibilities.
3. It includes: selfish desires resulting in unclean sexual unions or other sinful desires
4. It results in: forsaking covenant responsibilities and treachery against the mate.
5. There is no need to limit acts of fornication to sexually related acts.
6. The breaking of the marital covenant is a very serious offense.
7. When committed the salvation of the guilty unrepentant individual is questioned.
8. Either gender is held equally responsible to remain faithful to the marital covenant.

As we continue our study, we need to try to remember the above points about marriage and divorce. In our next lesson we will be looking at God's teachings on divorce.

“Grounds For Divorce: Loss Of Favour”

Mal 2:13-16 (KJV)

13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [*it*] with good will at your hand. 14) Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [*is*] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [*one*] covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

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6. A Summary Of Our Study and Closing Thoughts

We have previously seen that one of the grounds for allowable divorce is the ground of fornication. By “fornication”, we mean the forsaking of our God-given marital responsibilities (marital covenant) in pursuit of fulfilling sinful selfish desires.

We saw in Matt 19: and Mark 10:, as the Pharisees tested Christ on the subject of divorce they referenced Deut 24:1-4, as the OT teaching on the grounds for allowable divorce...

Deut 24 1-4

1) When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give [*it*] in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2) And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be

another man's [*wife*]. 3) And [*if*] the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth [*it*] in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her [*to be*] his wife; 4) Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that [*is*] abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee [*for*] an inheritance.

In Christ's response we saw that the Lord did not undo the teachings of Deut 24:, but He actually upheld it and explained it more fully in His teachings on the grounds of fornication. For our lesson this morning, let's look at this text to see in greater detail what is being taught and how it applies to the question of divorce in today's society.

Let's continue our study by looking at what is meant by the Biblical phrase "uncleanness" to understand the Biblical teachings on marriage, divorce and remarriage.

THE SCRIPTURES:

Deut 24 1-4

THE STUDY:

"Uncleanness" Word Study:

The various meanings of "uncleanness" found in the Bible...

1. Nakedness, Naked –

Gen 9:22-23, – Noah's physical nakedness seen by son;

Lev 18:, Lev 20:19, - uncover nakedness - sexual union (13 others)

2. Shame –

Isa 20:4, Isa 47:3, Lam 4:21 – shame of nations who rebel

3. Uncleanness –

Lev 18:19 – sexual relations period of uncleanness

Deut 24:1 – divorce uncleanness

4. Destitute –

Ps 141:8 – soul not destitute

5. Discover Nakedness -

Lev 20:18 – intercourse during period

Isa 3:17 – Lord will discover secret parts of nation

Hab 3:13 – Lord discovering all of nation

6. Pour Out –

Isa 32:15 – HS Pentecost

Isa 53:12 – Christ blood poured out cross

7. Raze –

Ps 137:7 – Edom said raze Israel

8. Spread self –

Psa 37:35 wicked spread as green tree

9. Dishonor –

Ezra 4:14 – Kings dishonor allowing Israel to re-build Jerusalem

Summary Of Word Study

As you can see “uncleanness” in the Scriptures describes many different types of actions or conditions that bring shame upon the one guilty of the uncleanness.

Here is a quick listing of the above... shame of having physical nakedness revealed, shame of being caught rebelling against authority or Godliness, shame following illicit sexual relations, shame of being destitute and poverty stricken, shame of having undesirable character revealed, shame of public guilt revealed, shame of complete defeat and destruction, shame of public abuse and domination of innocent.

You can see from the above listing that “uncleanness” involves multiple, varied types of shame.

Let's try to apply this basic principle of "uncleanness" as we look at the Deut 24: passage verse by verse...

Deu 24:1-4

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her,

Here we have a couple who has accepted the responsibilities of the marital covenant....

and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her:

Here, we see that the husband sees something in his wife that causes her shame (and by implication brings shame upon himself as well). The Bible is not specific about what that "shameful" thing is whether it be a shameful act or shameful attribute. We know this "uncleanness" is not the sin of adultery. If so, based on the OT laws of Moses' day she would have been stoned to death and, therefore, the husband automatically would be loosed. (Lev 20:10)

That is not what is really important in this teaching. What is important is how the knowledge of this shameful thing has affected the heart of the husband. It turns him against her. The Bible describes this as "she find no favour in his eyes".

What is meant by this phrase? The word favour means precious, graced or forgiving. It is saying that the woman is no longer held precious in his sight. He no longer is willing to display grace and forgiveness to her. It is not simply "getting angry" with his spouse for some uncleanness. It is setting his heart against her allowing no chance for forgiveness with no desire to forgive. It is developing a permanent attitude of harboring resentment against her. It is the type of attitude that constantly demands "getting even with her" and possessing a burning hatred that cannot be quenched nor appeased. This goes in direct conflict with the command to hold his spouse as precious, seeing her as the weaker vessel (Eph 5:25-31; 1 Pet 3:7). It is basically saying that the husband now breaking his marital covenantal responsibilities by holding permanent hatred in his heart for his spouse.

Also, Deut 24: does not address whether the "shameful thing" was a breaking of her martial covenant or not. Perhaps, what the husband found out that his wife had already broken her marital covenant if so, divorce would be allowed with the wife as the party held responsible for breaking the covenant, regardless of the existence or nonexistence of hatred in his heart.

However, if the wife's "shameful thing" was not a forsaking of her covenant, a divorce was still allowed due to lack of abiding favor (unforgiveness, hatred) in the husband's heart, with the husband being held responsible for the sundering of the marriage union.

Divorce based upon unjust hatred in the heart of a spouse for the mate is contained in Christ's teachings on divorce on the grounds of fornication... a man hating his wife is a type of fornication (following his selfish desires bringing about unclean actions. He is selfishly being critical of his wife for unjust reasons.) Again, divorce in this case is allowed. LJC even stated that divorce was due to "hardness of heart" - that is exactly what is happening the man has hardened his heart against the woman unjustly.

In any issue rising to level where a spouse hates their mate, divorce is allowed for sake of the hated mate. Any spouse that hates their mate has forsaken their marital responsibilities. The mate is in jeopardy of being abused by the spouse who holds the hate towards them. This abuse can take many forms... psychological, physical, sexual etc. The divorce is allowed to take place for the sake of protection of the mate that is hated. (see our previous study on fornication)

then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house.

If he is unforgiving and possessing hatred in his heart he would have to legally divorce her and give her a bill of divorcement (proof she is no longer married). This would allow her to be remarried to another man. Here, we see God's watch care over her allowing her to be removed from an possible abusive situation and making sure she would have a chance to be taken care of by another husband.

And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*.

And also we see His allowance in her being remarried after divorce.

And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife;

If this woman became loosed from her second marriage, whether due to divorce based on her second husband's hatred (hardened heart) or death of her husband...

Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD:

Her first husband would not be allowed to remarry her. This emphasizes the severity and finality of divorce. The first husband needs to think seriously before he allows hatred to enter his heart and he permanently forsakes his spouse. If she remarries, he will never be able to remarry her and undo the wrong that he has done. This was for the protection of the innocent spouse, as well as the protection of the societal marriage institution as a whole.

People should not be walking in and out of marriages thinking they can always undo what they have done. There are permanent, severe consequences to the entering into and then breaking marital vows. To attempt to bypass these principles are totally disgusting before God.

and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

These principles not only apply to one given instance, but to all of society as well. Being God's people, we are to respect our blessed position before Him and not bring sin into the land by forsaking our marital covenantal responsibilities and then think we can undo the sin that we have already committed.

To summarize the most basic teaching in this text... In any issue rising to a level where a spouse develops a permanent hatred against their mate, divorce should be allowed for the sake of the hated mate. In other words this type of sin is selfishness on part of the spouse where they selfishly, critically, find fault towards the mate for insignificant reasons. This results in the spouse rupturing the marital covenant by not taking proper care and treatment of his mate.

SUMMARY:

What we have seen so far can be summarized as follows:

In lesson #1

1. Marriage is a covenant relationship
2. The parties of the covenant are the husband and wife
3. God is the witness to the making of the covenant, He is not a party in the covenant

4. God as witness will hold each party accountable to keep their vows
5. Marriage is described as a "cleaving" and a "one-flesh" relationship
6. Both of these descriptions imply a closeness, unity and intimacy between the couple
7. The marriage union SHOULD NOT BE broken by man but CAN BE broken by man.
8. Man's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "to love, nourish, cherish"
9. Woman's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "a help meet, a companion"

In lesson #2:

1. Divorce is the act of sundering the marital covenant making it void. The guilty parties of the covenant are held responsible.
2. Divorce is allowed in cases of "loss of favour", "fornication", or "departure"
3. God allows divorce to protect the innocent party from abuse and mistreatment.
4. God allows for remarriage in the case of "loss of favour", "fornication" and "departure"

In lesson #3:

1. The Lord teaches us that divorce is allowed by God when fornication takes place.
2. "Fornication" is the fulfilling sinful desires resulting in unclean actions and forsaking of God given responsibilities.
3. It includes: selfish desires resulting in unclean sexual unions or other sinful desires
4. It results in: forsaking covenant responsibilities and treachery against the mate.
5. There is no need to limit acts of fornication to sexually related acts.
6. The breaking of the marital covenant is a very serious offense.
7. When committed the salvation of the guilty unrepentant individual is questioned.
8. Either gender is held equally responsible to remain faithful to the marital covenant.

In lesson #4

1. Being "treacherous", "hardhearted", "hateful", "loss of favour" speak of same attitude.
2. Hard-heartedness to spouse is, in essence walking away from the marital covenant
3. Hard-heartedness is another type of "fornication" (a legitimate ground for divorce), it is breaking the marital vows by not caring for them as they should.
4. Hardheartedness leads to physical, psychological or mental abuse of the spouse.
5. Divorce is allowed for the protection if the innocent spouse. It eliminates future abuse.
6. If "uncleanness" breaks the covenant, the unclean one is guilty of sundering the union.
7. If "uncleanness" does not break the vows, then the hateful one is guilty of the sundering.

As we continue our study, we need to try to remember the above points about marriage and divorce. In our next lesson we will continue to look at God's teachings on divorce.

“Grounds For Divorce: Departure”

Mal 2:13-16 (KJV)

13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [*it*] with good will at your hand. 14) Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [*is*] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [*one*] covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

As one of the most important institutions that the Lord established, marriage is a very important subject that Christians need to understand and honor. In this series we will be looking at:

1. What we need to know about marriage to understand divorce.
2. The definition, allowance and purpose of divorce and allowance of remarriage.
3. The Biblical grounds for divorce (fornication).
4. The Biblical grounds for divorce (loss of favour).
5. The Biblical grounds for divorce (departure).
6. A Summary Of Our Study and Closing Thoughts

As we continue our study on the Biblical grounds for divorce, keep in mind we have already seen that the Lord has taught us that “fornication” (the fulfilling of our fleshly, sinful desires resulting in acts of sin and the forsaking of God given responsibilities) was one ground of divorce.

We also saw that this teaching of Christ upheld the OT allowance for divorce given by Moses which is described as “loss of favour”, “hatred” or “hardheartedness”. We also saw in our study of Moses’ allowance that “loss of favour” was very closely related to the sin of fornication. It was either the same thing as fornication or, if not the same as, certainly one type of fornication.

Let us now turn our attention to the teachings of the Apostle Paul and what he tells us about the Biblical ground for divorce, “departure”...

1Cor 7:10-16, 39-40

And unto the married I command, [*yet*] not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from [*her*] husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to [*her*] husband: and let not the husband put away [*his*] wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such [*cases*]: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save [*thy*] husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save [*thy*] wife?...

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

THE SCRIPTURES:

Deut 24 1-4; Mal 2:13-16; Matt 5:27-32; Matt 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18

1Cor 7:10-16; 1Cor 7:39-40

THE STUDY:

In 1 Cor 7:10-16 we find that the Apostle Paul explains that "departure" from the marital covenant is a Biblical ground for divorce.

Let's begin our study by coming to an understanding of the meaning of the term "depart":

This term is translated from the Greek word "chorizo".

“chorizo” is defined as:

1. to place space between
2. to part
3. to divide
4. to go away
5. to separate

“chorizo” is translated by the phrases:

1. “put asunder” – Mat 19:3-6; Mark 10:2-12
2. “to depart” – Act 1:4, Act 18:1-6, 1 Cor 7:10-16, Philemon 1:10-16
3. “shall separate” – Rom 8:31-39, Heb 7:22-28
4. This word is NEVER translated “divorce” nor “put away” in NT Scriptures.

“chorizo” is used to describe:

1. Sunder a marriage – Mat 19:3-6; Mar 10:2-12
2. Departure from a physical location – Acts 1:4; Acts 18:1-6
3. Separation from love – Rom 8:31-39
4. Departure from a marriage – 1 Cor 7:10-16
5. Depart from responsibilities / obligations– Philemon 1:10-16
6. Separation from sinners influences– Heb 7:22-28

To summarize our word study: “chorizo” can clearly designate 4 types of separation....

1. a physical separation of distance (Acts 1:4, 18:1-6, Philemon 1:10-16?)
2. a separation of parties once united by a covenant, obligation, or responsibilities (Mat 19:3-6, Mar 10:2-12, 1 Cor 7:10-16, Philemon 1:10-16)
3. a separation of parties united by emotions (Rom 8:31-39)
4. a separation from the influence of others (Heb 7:22-28)

Therefore, based on the above, chorizo can refer not only to a physical separation, but also to an emotional, influential or obligational separation. “Depart” is not obligated to mean physically separated. For example, when Onesimus physically “departed” from Philemon he was also refusing to submit to his responsibilities to serve Philemon. Christ was said to be “separate” (departed) from sinners while dwelling among them. If we understand this principle it is a tremendous aid in understanding Paul’s teachings.

In the context of the marital covenant, the phrase "depart" can be describing forsaking the responsibilities of the marital covenant. It is not limited to describing someone who has physically left the household to live elsewhere.

One way that a spouse can desert the marital covenant is by physically leaving the relationship, departing from the home and living elsewhere. However, a person can also depart from their covenantal responsibilities by choosing not to fulfill them. Although they are living under the same roof, they have still departed from their responsibilities. This is what we can learn from the meaning of "chorizo"

We will be applying these principles as we look at the 1 Cor 7 text...

1Cor 7:10-16, 39-40

10) And unto the married I command, [yet] not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from [her] husband:

11) But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to [her] husband:

A woman is not to forsake her marital responsibilities (resulting in her divorce). If she does receive a divorce based upon her sinful departure out of the marriage, she is to remain unmarried to have the ability to reconcile to husband or actually return to her husband. This prohibition to remarry would exist as long as reconciliation was an option.

and let not the husband put away [his] wife.

Just as in the teachings of Christ, Paul then explains that these principles do not apply to only the female, but they also apply to the male of the marital relationship.

12) But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.13) And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

Paul will be instructing us in an area that Christ has not particularly addressed in detail. We are not to expect to look back at the teachings of Christ and find these same truths explicitly taught in the context of saved being married to a lost person.

In the case of a saved person being married to a lost person, the saved should not seek to separate themselves from the unbelieving spouse as long as the spouse desires to continue in the marital covenant with them. He is explaining this to refute any who may say that the principle of being "chosen out of this world" (John 15:19), "friendship with world" (James 4:4), "unequally yoked" (2 Cor 6:14), or Paul's instructions to not "company" with unbelievers in (1 Cor 5:10) should result in divorce for the believer/unbeliever couple.

The reminder that this applies to both genders is once again stated.

14) For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

The reason for this prohibition to divorce the unbeliever is based on knowledge that the saved spouse will be a recipient of temporal blessings that can be shared with the lost spouse. Blessings of protection, finances, wisdom to lead family etc etc can be received by the saved and shared with the lost. Also, more importantly, the unbelieving spouse can be influenced by the believing spouse and come to spiritual salvation. In other words, the lost spouse has much to gain by remaining married to the saved spouse.

For the sake of the children, it is best for the couple to remain married if the lost continues to fulfill their marital responsibilities. The saved should not be concerned that the lost will be a bad influence before the child. Remember, the lost is keeping their marital vows, and therefore setting a good example for the child to follow. Also, the child will be sharing in the temporal blessings placed upon the believing parent. And finally, the child as they see the testimony of the believing parent before their eyes may come to a knowledge of Christ and be saved.

15) But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such [*cases*]: but God hath called us to peace.

Paul is acknowledging that a separation may take place, just as Christ had said (Matt 10:34-39). But this separation should not be initiated by the believing spouse.

If the unbeliever decides to no longer keep the covenant responsibilities and be divorced, their believing spouse is to allow the divorce to take place. It is for their protection that the unbeliever departs so that they will not suffer abuse. The Lord desires peace in a marital union not abuse, discord and hatred. In all three sections of our study (1 Cor 7, Matt 19, Deut 24, we see a harmony and agreement in the teachings of God:

Remember, this is the same basic principle taught by Christ concerning fornication. This lost person has chosen to forsake his marriage based upon the fulfilling of his fleshly desires (we are not told the specific desires involved in this case.) Since this fornication is a legitimate ground for divorce, the believer is to allow the unbeliever to depart. It will result in peace and will free them of their marital obligations. At that point they can be remarried or remain single based upon the Lord's individual will for their lives.

It is also the basic principle of Deut 24 passage where the husband allows his heart to become hardened to the wife and therefore chooses to forsake his marital covenant, divorcing her. The divorced wife is then allowed to be remarried due as the innocent party that was treacherously divorced. This is the same sin of fornication that we have looked at previously.

What if a believer departs from the marital covenant? No one can know the spiritual condition of another person with any certainty. I believe it is very possible that Paul making the assumption that anyone who consistently, unrepentantly forsakes his marital covenant is to be assumed to be an unbeliever. When a professing believer forsakes his marital covenant they are to be dealt with under the rules of church discipline found in Matt 18:15-17. If the professing believer refuses to return to keeping the covenant after this process, he is to be assumed to be lost and these verses then apply. This is why Paul does not even bring up what to do in the case of a believing one that departs from the covenant.

Again, note that gender makes no difference in the applications of these principles.

16) For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save [*thy*] husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save [*thy*] wife?...

To help encourage and motivate those saved and married to the lost, keep in mind that through your testimony, the lost may come to a saving knowledge of Christ. At that point in time, you will have the believing spouse that you have so greatly desired. The answer to the issue is to live your life for Christ in the view of your lost spouse. The answer is not to divorce your lost spouse, who is faithful to their vows, for the sake of gaining a believing spouse.

39) The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

Paul is now explaining the very basic principle that when we are married the bonds of that marriage are to remain in effect. The marital covenant is to be until "death do us part". Both parties are to enter into the covenant and live under the covenant with the intent that it should not be broken. It will only be after the death of the faithful spouse that we will be freed to marry a second time to a believer only.

However, this verse is not to be used to undo the teaching that although the marital covenant is to be permanent, it can be broken by acts of fornication which frees the innocent party from their marital responsibilities. This verse must be interpreted within the context of the entire Bible...

For example, note again Paul's instruction in verse 15 of this same chapter. He clearly states that the spouse who had been deserted is now no longer under their covenantal responsibilities. This takes place at the time of the divorce not the death of the departing spouse. Likewise the Deut 24:1-4 passage that clearly allows the remarriage of the wife that has been divorced by her husband. Etc etc etc. We have seen these basic principles throughout this study.

40) But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

Paul now gives his opinion that, in most instances, it is better for the one who enters a single state to remain single. It is easier to concentrate on the things of the Lord and to out from under the possibility of abuse and mistreatment. However, this decision must be made based upon the individual circumstances of each person. And above all else, must be based upon the specific will of God for our lives.

SUMMARY:

What we have seen so far can be summarized as follows:

In lesson #1

1. Marriage is a covenant relationship
2. The parties of the covenant are the husband and wife
3. God is the witness to the making of the covenant, He is not a party in the covenant
4. God as witness will hold each party accountable to keep their vows
5. Marriage is described as a "cleaving" and a "one-flesh" relationship
6. Both of these descriptions imply a closeness, unity and intimacy between the couple
7. The marriage union SHOULD NOT BE broken by man but CAN BE broken by man.
8. Man's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "to love, nourish, cherish"
9. Woman's responsibility in a marriage union summarized as "a help meet, a companion"

In lesson #2:

1. Divorce is the act of sundering the marital covenant making it void. The guilty parties of the covenant are held responsible.
2. Divorce is allowed in cases of "loss of favour", "fornication", or "departure"
3. God allows divorce to protect the innocent party from abuse and mistreatment.
4. God allows for remarriage in the case of "loss of favour", "fornication" and "departure"

In lesson #3:

1. The Lord teaches us that divorce is allowed by God when fornication takes place.
2. "Fornication" is the fulfilling sinful desires resulting in unclean actions and forsaking of God given responsibilities.
3. It includes: selfish desires resulting in unclean sexual unions or other sinful desires
4. It results in: forsaking covenant responsibilities and treachery against the mate.
5. There is no need to limit acts of fornication to sexually related acts.
6. The breaking of the marital covenant is a very serious offense.
7. When committed the salvation of the guilty unrepentant individual is questioned.
8. Either gender is held equally responsible to remain faithful to the marital covenant.

In lesson #4

1. Being "trecherous", "hardhearted", "hateful", "loss of favour" speak of same attitude.
2. Hard-heartedness to spouse is, in essence walking away from the marital covenant
3. Hard-heartedness is another type of "fornication" (a legitimate ground for divorce), it is breaking the marital vows by not caring for them as they should.
4. Hardheartedness leads to physical, psychological or mental abuse of the spouse.
5. Divorce is allowed for the protection if the innocent spouse. It eliminates future abuse.
6. If "uncleanness" breaks the covenant, the unclean one is guilty of sundering the union.
7. If "uncleanness" does not break the vows, then the hateful one is guilty of the sundering.

In lesson #5:

1. "Depart" refers to a physical departing or a separation from responsibilities of covenant
2. A believing couple should realize that God desires marriage to be permanent.
3. When faithful to the covenant, after the death of a spouse remarriage is allowed
4. If a believer chooses to depart they must remain single or be reconciled
5. The departing believer is looked upon as lost following efforts of church discipline.
6. Innocent party that is divorced is released from their bonds and allowed to remarry.
7. The unbeliever is allowed to depart for peace, avoidance of abuse, and freedom
8. Departing from the covenant (1 Cor 7) is fornication.
9. Sending away an unfavoured spouse (Deut 24) is fornication.
10. The teachings of Christ, Moses and Paul are harmonious.

With this entry our study is now made complete. In our next lesson we will review and summarize what we have seen.

“Summary Of Our Study”

Mal 2:13-16 (KJV)

13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [*it*] with good will at your hand. 14) Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [*is*] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [*one*] covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

As one of the most important institutions that the Lord established, marriage is a very important subject that Christians need to understand and honor. In this series we will be looking at:

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3. The Biblical grounds for divorce (fornication).
4. The Biblical grounds for divorce (loss of favour).
5. The Biblical grounds for divorce (departure).
6. A Summary Of Our Study and Closing Thoughts

Please understand, for this study we will only be looking at information that is pertinent to the subject of marriage and divorce. Since marriage and the family is such a large subject we cannot begin to cover all aspects of the marriage union in this study. Therefore, other subjects concerning marriage will be covered at another time.

Also, this series of blog postings do not begin to cover every verse in the Bible that touches on the subject of marriage and divorce. To try to cover all the verses involving marriage and divorce would lead to a multi-part posting of maybe 40 or 50 parts. I have books on marriage and divorce that are well over 200 pages long. So, once again, please understand I will be covering just a few representative verses on this subject to cover the basic principles concerning marriage and divorce.

If, after the series is completed you have questions about any individual verse I have not covered I'll be glad to answer, to the best of my ability, any question you may have. Please feel free to ask them in a comment on the blog or by email at settledinheaven@gmail.com

Also, for those who have questions about same sex-marriage, please see my blog posting entitled "Same-Sex Marriage: What does the Bible say?" for a more complete study on that subject.

Let's begin this summary of what we have seen throughout the Scriptures concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.

THE SCRIPTURES:

Mal 2:13-16

THE STUDY:

To bring our study to completion let's look at section of scripture in Malachi 2:13-16 that supports all of our previous findings...

Mal 2:13-16 (KJV)

13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth [*it*] with good will at your hand. 14) Yet ye say, Wherefore?

The Israelites were experiencing a time of judgment at the hand of Almighty God. He was no longer looking upon the nation with pleasure, there was no longer answered prayers, no acceptance of worldly remorse, and no acceptance of their worship and praise. Why?

Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet [*is*] she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

He was opposed to them because they were mistreating their wives and breaking the marital vows that they had made before in the presence of their Lord. Keep in mind, they had made promises to one another at their marriage (forming the marital covenant). But those promises were made in the presence of the Lord. He was the witness to the covenant into which they

were entering. Therefore as they broke their promises to their wives, the Lord was avenging and protecting the innocent wives by beginning to judge these men for their sins.

The Lord describes their mistreatment of their wives as dealing “treacherously” with them. This term means to “to be unfaithful”, “to pillage”, “to work secretly”. He is saying that they were being unfaithful to their promise as they were mistreating and harming their wives deceitfully.

15) And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

How could they mistreat the one to whom they were so closely united? They were working against the revealed plans and purposes of their Lord. He wanted them to be godly and set apart from the other nations, instead they were living as the heathen abusing their wives for their own personal gain.

The remedy? Control their sinful desires and cease from abusing and misusing their wives.

16) For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for [one] covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

The Lord hates for there to be divorces, and yet their actions were grounds for divorce. Once again, by breaking their marital covenant as they sought to fulfill their sinful desires (at their wife’s expense) they were committing fornication and deserving of divorce.

They were trying to hide their sinful actions from God by hypocritically approaching His altar with gifts and tears. But He knew their hearts and the condition of their marriages. The marital covenant has been broken and there was no true sorrow for their actions.... Divorce would be the only remedy to defend their wives. They must change their ways or divorce would take place.

Here we see clearly the Lord liking “putting away” (divorce) with their continued “treachery” (fornication), the grounds for upcoming divorce. This folks, has been the basis of our entire study.... The Lord allows divorce for the sake of the innocent party to stop abuse and mistreatment following fornication. In this context, the fornication was the husband’s

forsaking of their marital responsibilities for the sake of the fulfillment of selfish desires. These desires were being fulfilled through the abusive treatment of their wives.

How sad it is when a spouse chooses to commit fornication when they break their marital agreement, harm the one they had promised to love, simply to fulfill their fleshly lusts.

What we have seen in our studies....

What we have seen so far can be summarized as follows:

In lesson #1

1. Marriage is a covenant relationship
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8. Departing from the covenant (1 Cor 7) is fornication.
9. Sending away an unfavoured spouse (Deut 24) is fornication.
10. The teachings of Christ, Moses and Paul are harmonious.

Some closing thoughts...

Thoughts on the need to harmonize the OT with the NT...

Please keep in mind, the key to being able to harmonize all of the OT and NT verses on marriage and divorce is coming to an expanded definition of "fornication" based upon its usage in the Bible. If we hold to a more limited meaning to "fornication" then the teachings of Moses, Christ and Paul cannot be harmonized.

If the definition is not expanded, then we have to say that the OT instructions given by Moses no longer apply to us today. Also, we have to say that, when Christ taught on the subject, He gave an incomplete answer to the issue at hand and the Apostle Paul had to expand the grounds for divorce to include desertion. I can see no other solution to these issues and, speaking for myself, I am not prepared to accept this way of thinking.

I believe that the Bible's teachings on marriage, divorce and remarriage are a part of God's moral laws. Therefore, both the OT and NT teachings apply to our lives today. If this is the case, we must be able to reconcile all the OT teachings and examples with the teachings and examples we find in the NT. The expanded definition of "fornication" does this very thing.

Likewise, I believe that when Christ taught on the issue, He was giving a full and complete answer to the questions being posed to Him. Paul's teachings simply more fully explained what Christ had already taught. Again, this I believe is a far better way to understand what Paul was doing when he wrote his instructions in 1 Cor 7:

The "loosing favour" and "hatred" of Deut 24: is a type fornication (breaking the covenant due to following selfish desires.) It is a man coming to the point of hating his wife for whatever selfish cause which motivates him to turn his back on his covenantal responsibilities. This is tantamount to him "departing" from his covenant responsibilities as we read in 1 Cor 7:1. This "departure" is a type of fornication as well. Both cases are an act of "treachery" against the innocent spouse (Mal 2:). Christ speaks of all these when He teaches using the term "fornication" (Matt 19: & 5:).

Thoughts on the need to deal with spousal abuse...

One of the most common beliefs concerning divorce is limiting the grounds of divorce to adultery and physical desertion only. However, then a very important issue remains to be addressed in the Scriptures. What to do in the case of the marital covenant being broken in other areas such as physical (or psychological) abuse and other forms of mistreatment.

Some would say that the answer to this is simply for the abused party to leave the home and live separated from their spouse without getting a divorce, and by implication, not being remarried for the remainder of their lives. I can see a few real problems with this "theory". First of all the Bible does not give these instructions anywhere. To my knowledge the only time that spousal separation is discussed is in 1 Cor 7: where Paul speaks of a couple

agreeing to separate for a limited time to pray and fast. They are to have a date set for their reunion. This is not in any way what we are speaking of in terms of the need to separate due to spousal abuse.

So what we have is the Bible being silent about the use of spousal separation to deal with this issue that has existed during the days of the OT, NY and today's time. This idea is simply the well-meaning thoughts of human beings with no Biblical mandate.

If we stop and think about it what we are asking the couple to live separately, not fulfill any of their covenantal responsibilities, and yet call themselves married. This is my mind is creating a hypocritical type of relationship. Neither couple is fulfilling their vows but still "married".

However, if we understand that the OT teachings still apply to us today, we can see in cases of spousal abuse, this is forsaking of the marital covenant and it is grounds for a divorce. This divorce allows the abused to be removed from the situation and allowed to begin a new life of singleness or being married to another.

Thoughts on making divorce easier...

There are many who say that by holding to the teachings I have presented that it makes divorce much easier to attain. I do very much appreciate the motives behind this accusation. The world in which we live is filled with marriages that are failing. In many cases, divorces with no Biblical grounds are being sought and attained. These men and women are attempted to stand up and make divorces as difficult as possible for the sake of the married individuals as well as society as a whole. I very much appreciate their motives and their attempts to honor the marital union. However all the good intentions in the world cannot justify false teaching.

My feeling is that the Bible makes it very plain that the Lord hates divorce and desires for every marriage to be permanent in nature. We all should strive for that. Every time that the marriage vows are taken, and every time that marriage, divorce or remarriage is taught there should be CONSTANT reminders of the Lord's desires for permanence of marital vows. He is the witness to our covenant making and, as such, will chasten the guilty while protecting the

innocent. To break the marital covenant is a big deal, a really big deal. The Lord desires for marriage to be permanent and we should strive for that.

The Lord also desires peace in the marriage union and will not allow treachery against a spouse to continue indefinitely. For these instances where the covenant has been broken, and spouses are being abused, if no repentance is shown, the Lord allows for the marriage to end for the protection of the abused and the abuse to come to an end. Please remember both the Deu. 24 and the Mal. 2:13-16 passages among others. Do these verses not make it plain that the purpose of divorce is to stop this treachery against the spouses? Also, if we properly define "fornication" the teachings of the Lord will uphold this principle as well.

Thoughts in closing...

We need to remember that our Lord's desire for the marriage unit. Above all else, our Lord desires for marriage to be permanent. Even when a spouse is guilty of an offense allowing divorce, there should be room for forgiveness and reconciliation whenever true repentance is shown by the offending party.

Also, we should keep in mind that for those who have been divorced (following a marriage to one who had consistently, stubbornly, unrepentantly broken the marital covenant) you are free to remarry and to go forward with your life with no guilt, knowing you have done all that is possible to save your marriage.

If you have been a participant in a divorce that was not based upon legitimate grounds... keep in mind that there is forgiveness being offered from our great gracious God. There is no sin so great it cannot be forgiven by our Lord.

If, after you have read every part of this entire series, you continue to have questions about anything I have taught or any individual verse I have not covered, I'll be glad to answer them. Please feel free to ask them in a comment on the blog or by email at settledinheaven@gmail.com

May The Lord Continue To Bless You As You Seek To Study The Word.