

## God's Word Concerning Divorce and Remarriage 1 Corinthians 7:10-28

### Introduction:

1. There is not a more emotionally charged issue than the one we will talk about tonight. Of course, this is understandable. Marriage is a bonding together of two people into one flesh. Any time a marriage is dissolved it is a gut-wrenching, devastating thing.
2. People love to argue about this subject. There are those that take a very hard-line stance that all divorce is wicked and God never gives any grounds for a divorce, nor does He ever allow remarriage. **Jeremiah 3:8** and **Ezra 10** clearly refute this idea.
  - The old tentacles of Roman Catholic legalism still bind themselves around the issue of divorce and remarriage.
3. But what does Paul teach the church about this issue under the dispensation of grace?
  - **Deuteronomy 24** explains this issue under the law.
  - **Matthew 19** explains this issue regarding Israel under kingdom law.
  - **1 Corinthians 7** will explain this issue to the body of Christ under grace.
4. There are three principles Paul gives us.

### Two believers are never to seek a divorce. vs. 10-11

1. When Paul says, "...yet not I, but the Lord" he is referring to God's original plan for marriage in **Genesis 2:24** before sin entered the picture. Here's the point:
  - We have regained in Christ all that we lost in Adam, so there is no reason why two believers under grace cannot fulfill God's original plan.
  - God allowed divorce under Israel's program because of the hardness of their hearts.
  - But two Spirit-indwelt believers in this age can fulfill God's original plan for marriage.
2. This is why Paul gives absolutely no grounds for divorce among members of the Body of Christ. People will say, "But what if..." Paul gives no "what ifs." As believers we are to be living demonstrations of His grace to a lost world.
3. How does God forgive our sin? He completely and totally forgives us by grace. We become one flesh with Christ and He says that nothing can separate us from His love. God says, "Now you go and live with your spouse like that."
  - Your marriage is to reflect what grace and forgiveness are all about.
4. No matter what the failure of your spouse, as a believer under grace you are told to forgive in **Ephesians 4:32**. You are to apply grace to the situation, not considering divorce as an option. There is nothing God's grace cannot suffice to overcome.
5. But what about problems? Problems come in every marriage, but as two believers, you are indwelt by Christ, and you can work them out. Christ is compatible with Himself.
6. What if a believer goes ahead and seeks a divorce anyway? Verse 11 is very clear. Paul said either remain unmarried or be reconciled to your spouse.

- Notice he uses the word "unmarried." The Roman Catholic view that once you are married, it can never be changed and you are always married in the eyes of God, is wrong.
7. Why is Paul so emphatic about remaining unmarried? It is so that person can go back and apply grace to the situation and be reconciled.
  8. The bottom line: "Divorce" should not be in two believer's vocabulary.

**A believer should make every attempt to stay married to an unbeliever. vs. 12-16**

1. Paul now speaks by his apostolic authority and will give instructions concerning believers who find themselves married to unbelievers.
2. The Bible is clear that a believer should never **seek** a spouse that is unsaved. vs. 39
3. But what about if two unbelievers get married and one gets saved? In **Ezra 10** they put away their pagan wives. This would have been the only place to go in God's Word for instruction of this sort, but Paul will now explain what a believer should do under grace.
4. Paul says that if the unbeliever is willing to dwell with you as a believer - don't seek a divorce. Try to keep that marriage together. Why? Because, hopefully, you can win that lost spouse to Christ. vs. 16; cf. **1 Peter 3:1-2**
  - You are a sanctifying force in that home (vs. 14). Your spouse and children have the unique position of being regularly exposed to the Word of God living through you and it **will** have an impact. It will draw the issue to a head.
  - Verse 14 is a comfort to believers concerning the status of their marriage and their children. Without that believer in the home, there would be far less spiritual opportunity for the lost spouse and children.
5. But what if the unbeliever does not desire to continue in the marriage?
  - Many times this happens. The unbeliever wants the believer to live in the marriage as an unbeliever. Of course, the believer cannot do this. His or her first obligation is to the Lord.
  - When the believer won't do certain evil things or condone wickedness, many times conflict arises.
6. Sometimes, the unbeliever will want out of the marriage. If this happens, God says that the believer is not under bondage. Bondage to what? The marriage bond, in the context.
7. If the unbeliever departs, the marriage bond is broken, but the believer is not under bondage and is free to re-marry. God gives this allowance. You are not responsible for the other person's rebellion.

**A believer who has been divorced or deserted against their will is permitted to remarry. vs. 27-28**

1. Paul reiterates that a believer should never seek a divorce in verse 27. He says if you are bound unto a wife, seek not to be loosed.
  - This is interesting. Some teach that the only legitimate loosing from a marriage is when death occurs. They refer to verse 39 and **Romans 7:2**.
  - Death is **one way** to be loosed from the marriage bond. It is not the only way.
  - Try reading this idea into verse 27. "Art thou bound unto a wife, seek not her death?" or "Seek not to kill her?" Of course, this is not what he means.

- He's saying, "Seek not a divorce."
2. Art thou loosed from a wife?
    - This is in the perfect passive tense. This denotes an action that was done to you. It refers to a person that did not want the divorce or seek the divorce.
    - One of the believers in the marriage says, "I don't care what God says, I'm out of here. I'm divorcing you."
  3. Is the believer who did not want the divorce responsible for the other person's rebellion?
    - Paul says if this happens, "Seek not a wife." This is good advice and goes right along with his advice in verses 7-8. If one marriage has failed, you shouldn't jump right back in the fire.
    - But he gives some allowance in verse 28, "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned."
  4. Believers who have been divorced against their will are permitted to remarry without the stigma of wrong-doing.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. To sum it up, Paul says unless it is death or desertion, you should remain in that marriage bond and seek to work out any problems that may arise.
2. No matter how bad a marriage may be, divorce is a terrible, treacherous, painful, awful thing. It is a rending of your soul. **Illustration:** two pieces of paper glued together.
3. When you start to pull two lives apart, you tear up everything you touch.
4. A spiritual person would never take these principles and manipulate them to justify a divorce.
5. The purpose of these principles is to protect the spiritual person who has been put away by a carnal or lost person. There **is** such a thing as an innocent party. People who don't believe this have never been through a divorce, most likely.
6. If you have disobeyed God in this area of your life, what should you do?
  - If it is still possible for you to make things right and be reconciled, attempt to do so.
  - If you are remarried, you need to simply thank God for His grace and forgiveness and determine to honor Christ in your present marriage.