

# Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (Lesson 1)

## INTRODUCTION:

1. With this lesson we begin a series of lessons on marriage, divorce, and remarriage.
2. Yes, these are three different subjects, and while we will give each one some individual attention, the plan is to discuss them as they relate to each other.
3. Here are three major objectives for this series of lessons.
  - a. We want to see marriage the way God sees it, which is the only way we can ever see divorce the way He sees it.
  - b. We want to answer the very same question Jesus was asked, “Can a man divorce his wife for just any reason?” (Matthew 19:3). Of course, we want to make sure we answer it the same way He did.
  - c. And on the subject of remarriage, we want to know who can marry again with God’s approval.

## BODY:

- I. Before we do any of that, we need to first see the **importance** of this study.
  - A. God established the home—He built it!
    1. And so the last thing we want to do is wreck something He made.
    2. And that’s what we do—if we violate His teachings on these subjects.
    3. Respect for God demands that we respect His institutions—that we do everything in our power to preserve them the way He designed them.
  - B. Precious souls are at stake.
    1. “God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9)—many folks have some repenting to do in these very matters we’re studying, and if they don’t, they will perish.
      - a. And so we need to be able to take the Scriptures and show them where they are wrong.
    2. But teaching on this subject is also preventive—to prevent us and others we know from committing the same sins so many others have.
      - a. These sins carry bitter consequences, both in this life and the life to come. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if this series of lessons could save us from those bitter consequences?

- C. These matters affect who we receive into our fellowship in a local church.
  - 1. “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 19:9).
  - 2. Could we receive an adulterer into the church here, one who is not willing to repent?
    - a. 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-11.
    - b. We actually hurt them by receiving them, because now we’ve made them comfortable in what the Lord says is sin.
  - 3. These issues do not belong in the category of Romans 14, where we read about some who had scruples about eating certain meats (perhaps worried about the animal being strangled, Jewish regulations, offered to idols, etc.). But notice Romans 14:3—those on both sides were to receive one another.
    - a. When we’re talking about breaking the marriage covenant, and marriages the Lord calls adultery, we’re not anywhere close to the type issues discussed in Romans 14.
    - b. And we certainly can’t use or support those who **clearly** teach contrary to what Jesus taught.
  - 4. But on the flip side, if we choose NOT to receive someone, we better be sure.
    - a. And some scenarios are so complicated that it’s hard to give a definite answer.

II. Now, how are we going to settle the questions dealing especially with divorce and remarriage?

- A. Not by simply parroting what “we’ve always heard,” or what some well-respected preacher wrote or said.
  - 1. What we’ve heard or read may be altogether wrong, altogether right, or perhaps a combination of the two.
  - 2. It is our obligation to study it for ourselves and form our own conclusions (which may certainly involve help from what others have written and said).
    - a. We’ll do better filtering what we read and hear IF we first study it for ourselves.
  - 3. If you desire to be an elder one day, you really better have a good understanding of these subjects, because you WILL have to deal with some marriage, divorce, and remarriage issues.

- B. Not by appealing to emotional arguments.
  - 1. In regard to someone who does not have God's permission to remarry: "How could God possibly expect someone to remain single the rest of their lives? Wouldn't He want them to find happiness with another person?"
  - 2. "I know I shouldn't get a divorce, but God will understand. He knows just how miserable I am."
  - 3. It's easy for judgment to be clouded with emotion, especially when we know someone personally in one of these situations.
- C. Not by appealing to Old Testament regulations, a law which the N.T. describes as a shadow (Colossians 2:17), a law which the N.T. says we are not under (Galatians 3:23-25), a law which has been nailed to the cross (Ephesians 2:14-16).
  - 1. We will find some helpful principles in the O.T. (God's design for the home from the beginning, the covenant made in marriage, God's view of divorce, etc.).
  - 2. But as we will see later, Jesus puts His teaching on these subjects in contrast with O.T. regulations.
- D. Not by taking the hardest line possible, the softest line, or even the "middle of the road" line.
  - 1. The only way we can speak with certainty on questions related to marriage, divorce, and remarriage is when we have a "thus says the Lord."
  - 2. Whatever label people attach to our answers, we'll just have to live with that, but our foremost aim is to simply be in harmony with the New Testament Scriptures.
  - 3. Believe it or not, if we teach only what Jesus taught, some will still label us too hard and others too soft.
- E. So, to be clear...
  - 1. To settle the issues which arise from divorce and remarriage, we will appeal to the New Testament—to what Jesus and His inspired apostles said.
  - 2. We will strive to be careful with the text, and then teach with certainty only what we can be certain about—stand firm only on that which we can prove.

## **CONCLUSION:**

- 1. Looking ahead to lesson #2...
  - a. We will simply read through all the relevant passages on this subject. We need to do that BEFORE we start drawing any conclusions.