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# Words of Truth

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## Modern English Translations Broaden The Terms For Divorce

By: Brian A. Yeager

Throughout the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the Law of Christ we see that God did/ does NOT want His word changed (Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 12:32, Proverbs 30:5-6, Matthew 28:18-20, Galatians 1:6-12, and Revelation 22:18-19). The men whom taught the word of God were moved to speak by the Holy Spirit (II Samuel 23:2, Job 32:8, Isaiah 39:5, Jeremiah 1:9, Matthew 10:16-20, John 16:13, I Corinthians 2:9-13, I Corinthians 14:37, and II Timothy 3:15-17). Those men were not permitted to give their “interpretation” of what the Lord wanted them to say or write (II Peter 1:20-21).

For thousands of years the words of inspired men have been translated into languages other than what was originally written or spoken. This is where the difficulty of our study arises. For us that live here in El Paso, we know how difficult it can be to translate a word from one language into another. There are many English words that cannot be perfectly translated into Spanish. We also know that the Spanish we see around us is not exactly the same as you might find in other areas of Mexico or in Spain. Translating languages is difficult.

For our studies of the Scriptures we are fortunate to have many lexicons to aid us in properly understanding the original text. It is not expedient however, for most, to sit with a Greek New Testament, a concordance, and five lexicons as you try to go word by word. Thus, we depend on translations into our language. However, since our salvation depends upon us keeping all of God’s word (Luke 6:46, Luke 11:28, and James 2:10-12), we cannot be lazy. We have to help each other as we study to be sure we are getting the original meaning of the words we are reading in the English translation. Thankfully, we have a translation that is without known fatal errors in translation. However, there are many translations that play loose with what the Lord originally said. I want to illustrate that with a few translations of Matthew 19:9.

The New King James Version says: *“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). The English Standard Version says: *“And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery”* (Matthew 19:9). The New International Version says: *“I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery”* (Matthew 19:9). The New American Standard Version says: *“And I say to you,*

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*whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery*” (Matthew 19:9). Now, let’s study why this is a HUGE error!

### What’s The Big Deal?

The original text looked about like this: “λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι ὃς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην μοιχᾶται καὶ ὁ ἀπολελυμένην γαμήσας μοιχᾶται” (Matthew 19:9; Greek New Testament). I cannot read that. If you can, great! What I can do is identify the word that the versions above translated as “sexual immorality” or “immorality”. That word is “πορνεία”. The definition of that term is: “porneia; from 4203; harlotry (including adultery and incest); figuratively, idolatry: — fornication. Illicit sexual intercourse, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc. sexual intercourse with close relatives; sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman; metaph. the worship of idols, of the defilement of idolatry, as incurred by eating the sacrifices offered to idols” (Strong’s # 4202). If you use Thayer or other Greek Lexicons, you find very close definitions. The Scriptures also support this definition (i.e. I Corinthians 5:1).

Now ask yourself, does “sexual immorality” or “immorality” fit that definition? Let’s see. The word “sexual” means: “1 relating to the instincts, physiological processes, and activities connected with physical attraction or intimate physical contact between individuals. 2 relating to the two sexes or to gender • of or characteristic of one sex or the other: the hormones which control the secondary sexual characteristics. 3 • being of one sex or the other; capable of sexual reproduction” (New Oxford American Dictionary). Immorality means: “the state or quality of being immoral; wickedness” (New Oxford American Dictionary).

Here is the undeniable facts... The translation of “sexual immorality” or “immorality” are WAY TOO BROAD. It is sexually immoral to lust after a person you are not married to (Proverbs 6:25), but it is not the act of illicit [unlawful] sexual intercourse. You can STOP lust from turning into sin (Proverbs 6:20-29, I Corinthians 7:1-5, and James 1:13-16). The modern translations would allow a marriage to end if a spouse was sexually attracted to someone other than his or her mate. The Scriptures do NOT allow such. The Scriptures teach a married individual to be content with the sexual relationship in that marriage (Proverbs 5:18-23 and Hebrews 13:4).

### Conclusion

The accurate English translation of the Scripture we have discussed is as follows: “*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*” (Matthew 19:9). Let’s be sure not to put down the reliable version we have in the King James Version for the “easier to read” erring translations many have fallen in love with.