
Words of Truth

Once They Are Unmarried, Fornication Cannot Be The Cause

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I hate having to teach on the subject matter of marriages that have ended. Often, such is referred to as the subject matter of divorce. Then, the subject matter often turns into who has a right to remarry. I hate this subject, for the very idea that God can be pleased when a marriage ends is false (Mark 10:1-12). In a spiritual context pertaining to Israel's unfaithfulness, we find that the Lord hates putting away (Malachi 2:10-17). Among a long list of sinners the Lord says He will unleash His wrath against is covenant breakers (Romans 1:18-32). God is not pleased when a marriage fails.

When we observe our brethren suffering from the end of a marriage, we want to say something to give them hope. As a result, over the years, many errors on putting away and remarriage have been born. I am not intending to deal with all of those errors in this lesson. What we are going to discuss is often referred to as the "waiting game", "mental divorce", etc. The concept behind these doctrines is that a person is "married in God's eyes" until some imaginary line is crossed that these doctrines create. We are going to start by defining when GOD recognizes a marriage has ended.

This Is When God Says Two People Once Married Are Now Unmarried

*"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"* (I Corinthians 7:10-11). You do not have to have a great mind to understand what you just read. Once a wife (or husband) "departs" then she (or he) is "unmarried". The word depart means: "place room between, i.e. part; reflexively, to go away: — depart, put asunder, separate. To separate, divide, part, put asunder, to separate one's self from, to depart; to leave a husband or wife of divorce to depart, go away" (Strong's # 5563). That Greek word is used in Acts 1:4 in talking about the disciples not departing from Jerusalem. It is used in Acts 18:1-2 as Paul departed from Athens and of the Jews departing from Rome. In Romans 8:35; 39 that term is translated as "separate" regarding our relationship with Christ. In I Corinthians 7:15 it is used in discussing an unbeliever leaving a brother or sister. In Philemon 1:15 it is translated "departed" in discussing contextually a slave running away from his master. In Hebrews 7:26 the term "separate" is used to discuss Jesus' space of separation from sinners. Thus, a proper understanding is that a marriage has ended when a person leaves his or her spouse.

The terminology of “put away” is similar to that of “depart”. A brief definition is: “to send forth, in various applications (as follow): — cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up” (Strong’s # 863). It means to allow something (Matthew 3:15), to leave (Matthew 4:11, Hebrews 6:1, and Revelation 2:4), etc. “Putting away” and a “bill of divorcement” are not the same things (Matthew 5:31-32). Maybe we get confused because we traditionally talk about “divorce and remarriage” too often. Departing or putting away may lead to giving a bill of divorcement, but one can depart or put away his or her spouse without a bill of divorcement. Prior to any civil action (i.e. a divorce), we have learned that departing or putting away is the point in which a person is “unmarried”. The bill of divorcement comes into the discussion when it relates to remarriage.

So When Can The Unmarried Remarry?

“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? 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. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 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. 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. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Matthew 19:3-12).

The only exception to remaining unmarried, is when a person puts away their spouse for the cause of fornication. You just read that. Remarriage requires a bill of divorcement civilly. That is when divorcement enters in the discussion. The fornication has to occur prior to the putting away and the bill of divorcement that follows the putting away. It really is that simple. Any scenario you throw out doesn't change that!

Conclusion

God sees two people as unmarried when a person departs or is put away (I Corinthians 7:10-11). Whatever cause there was for the departure or the putting away is why they are unmarried. Fornication cannot later grant unmarried people the liberty to remarry.