

The tragedy of divorce plagues the world and many in the church. This life-altering change in marital status results in broken homes that often affects children who must adjust to a new living reality. In some cases the pain associated with divorce results in tears, recurring emotional wounds, feelings of guilt or shame, and even spiritual and financial struggles. While it is true that varying circumstances and factors often lead to divorce and remarriage, lack of honesty and transparency often leaves lingering questions that are not easily answered or resolved. Clearly, divorce is a painful result of the fall of mankind and sin is the root cause! Nonetheless, God continues to maintain a high view of the marriage institution that He established in the Garden of Eden, and He is not silent on this subject. Let's begin our study and learn What God Says About…"Divorce and Remarriage."

MARRIAGE—GOD'S ORIGINAL DESIGN

1. What did God promise to make for man that would fulfill his need for companionship?

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an _____ _____ for him." *Genesis 2:18*

Note: *God provided companionship for Adam. Indeed, it was God's wonderful idea to create the woman and bless Adam with his beautiful wife Eve. Marriage between a man and a woman is God's original design.*

2. What did God take from Adam's side when He created Eve?

[21]"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took _____ _____ _____ _____, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; [22]And _____ _____, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." *Genesis 2:21, 22*

Note: *God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. As he slept, God took one of the ribs from Adam's side and made the woman and brought her unto him. Eve being created from one of Adam's ribs indicated that she was to stand close to Adam's side as an equal. Adam was not to look down upon his wife or seek to control her. Adam was to love, cherish, and protect his beautiful wife Eve.*

3. What did Adam say when he first saw Eve?

"And Adam said, This is now _____ _____ _____ _____, and _____ _____ _____ _____: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." *Genesis 2:23*

4. According to scripture, what does a husband and wife become when they get married?

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be _____ _____." *Genesis 2:24*

5. How is marriage to be considered? How is the marriage bed to be kept?

"Marriage is _____ in all, and _____ _____ _____: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." *Hebrews 13:4*

Note: *Marriage is to be honored and respected by all. Indeed, it is precious in God's sight and it is to be viewed as precious in the sight of humanity as well. Marriage is a sacred institution established by God for the joy, pleasure, and happiness of a husband and wife. The marriage bed is to be kept pure. Without doubt, God will judge those who violate the marriage vow and defile the marriage bed.*

BOUND BY THE "LAW OF MARRIAGE"

6. According to 1 Corinthians 7:39, how long is the wife bound by the law of marriage to her husband?

"The wife is bound by the law _____ _____ _____ her _____ _____; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." *1 Corinthians 7:39*

7. How long does the law have dominion over a person?

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man _____ _____ _____ he _____?" *Romans 7:1*

8. When is the wife free to marry another man?

[2]"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the _____ _____ _____, she is loosed from the law of her husband. [3]So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her _____ _____ _____, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." *Romans 7:2, 3*

Note: *According to God's original design, marriage between a husband and a wife is to be a lifelong covenant or contract of which nothing but death should annul. In Romans 7:1-4, Paul teaches this truth by illustrating a marriage between a husband and a wife and then makes a spiritual application. The woman longs to be released from her miserable marriage. However, the law of marriage binds her to her husband, but if her husband dies, she is free to marry "another man." Although she is attracted to "another man" and desires to marry Him, she cannot do so while her first husband is still living (Romans 7:3). If she kills him or commits adultery, she would be in violation of the sixth and seventh commandments (Exodus 20:13 and 14). Furthermore, according to Paul's illustration, the other man will not enter into an unlawful union while her husband is alive. The woman is in a dilemma! How does she get her first husband to die? At this point, Paul makes a spiritual application. The law represents the Ten Commandments, the woman represents us, the first husband represents the flesh, and the man described as "another man" represents Christ. In the natural sense it is unlawful to kill her husband, but in the spiritual sense she can choose to die to the flesh, and when she dies, the dictatorial and controlling power of the flesh—her first husband dies. When this occurs, she can lawfully marry Christ of which the law sanctions this holy union.*

9. What did John the Baptist tell King Herod regarding Herodias, his brother Philip's wife?

[17]"For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. [18]For John had said unto Herod, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. [19]Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not." *Mark 6:17-19*

Note: *King Herod married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and John the Baptist denounced this unlawful marriage that was contrary to the biblical teaching of divorce and remarriage. In anger, Herodias influenced Herod to imprison John. As her quarrel against him brewed, she schemed*

and eventually had John the Baptist beheaded and received his head on a charger. It's important to note that John's words to Herod, the Roman king, reveals that God regards marriage as a sacred institution and He expects all to regard it as such. The close holy circle of marriage is to be strictly guarded, honored, and protected from defilement.

THE TRAGEDY OF DIVORCE

10. God has been a witness between whom? How does God consider the wife in this passage? How else does God describe the wife?

"Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between _____ _____ _____ _____ ____ _____ _____, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she _____ _____, and _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *Malachi 2:14*

11. What pointed question does Malachi ask regarding God's original plan between a husband and his wife?

"And _____ _____ ____ _____ _____? 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." *Malachi 2:15*

Note: *When God instituted and officiated the first marriage of the human family, Adam and Eve became one flesh (Genesis 2:23 and 24). Surely, God intended for the marriage relationship to remain intact forever. No one or nothing was to disrupt or sever the martial tie that God established in the Garden of Eden.*

12. According to the prophet Malachi, what does God hate?

"For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that ____ _____ _____ _____: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously." *Malachi 2:16*

Note: *According to Malachi 2:16, God hates "putting away"— divorce. In this passage, God expresses His attitude and feelings regarding the tragedy of divorce. He never intended for the sacred marriage tie to be severed by divorce. The Lord declares that when a man divorces his wife, he covers his garment with violence. He will suffer the corrupting consequences of defiling his marriage and he will also face the shame associated with it.*

QUESTIONS ABOUT DIVORCE

13. What question did the Pharisees ask Jesus about divorce?

"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, _____ _____ _____ for a man _____ _____ _____ his wife _____ _____ _____?" *Matthew 19:3*

Note: *The Pharisees questioned Jesus regarding the scriptural teachings of divorce and remarriage. They asked Him if a man could divorce his wife for "every cause." Jesus clearly read the motive of their question and He also understood how the marriage institution had been degraded through the erroneous teachings and practices of that day. Therefore, He would proceed to correct the circulating misconceptions, elevate marriage, and re-establish a correct understanding of this sacred institution.*

14. What period of time does Jesus reference when the Pharisees question him about the lawfulness of divorce?

[4]"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them _____ _____ _____ 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." *Matthew 19:4-6*

15. Which Old Testament prophet did the Pharisees name while seeking to justify their erroneous teachings about divorce?

"They say unto him, Why did _____ then command to give a _____ _____ _____, and to put her away?" *Matthew 19:7* (See Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

Note: *The Jews permitted a husband to divorce his wife for multiple reasons, even if his reason for doing so was trivial. When he put away his wife, she was free to marry another man.*

16. According to Jesus, why did Moses permit a legal writing of divorce during his day? What does Jesus say regarding the legal writing of divorce?

"He saith unto them, Moses _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ suffered you to put away your wives: but _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *Matthew 19:8*

Note: *Divorce and remarriage is a complex subject. Christ's disciples even had further questions privately (Matt. 19:10; Mark 10:10).*

BIBLICAL GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

17. According to His rightful authority, what is the only grounds Jesus permits for divorce?

[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 _____, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." *Matthew 5:31, 32*

18. According to Matthew 19:9, what does Jesus say is the only grounds for divorce?

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, _____ it be _____ _____, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." *Matthew 19:9*

"Unfaithfulness to the marriage vow has generally been seen to mean adultery or fornication. However, the New Testament word for fornication includes certain other sexual irregularities (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:9, 10; Rom. 1:24-27). Therefore, sexual perversions, including incest, child sexual abuse, and homosexual practices, are also recognized as a misuse of sexual powers and a violation of the divine intention in marriage. As such they are just cause for separation or divorce." *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 19th Revised Edition 2015,* pp. 158, 159.

ADULTERY

19. What does a husband cause his wife to do when he divorces her without biblical grounds? What sin is committed by the man who marries the divorced wife?

[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 _____ _____: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth _____." *Matthew 5:31, 32*

20. What sin does a husband and wife commit when they divorce their spouse and remarry without biblical grounds?

[11]"And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, commiteth _____ against her. [12]And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth _____." *Mark 10:11, 12*

Note: *While it is not uncommon today for married couples to obtain a legal divorce for unbiblical reasons, it must be noted that the biblical teaching of divorce and remarriage remains in effect. God's higher law supersedes the laws of the land. In other words, there are many who have obtained a legal divorce, but are still married in God's sight, in the biblical sense. Disobedience to God's Word is never a safe course to pursue.*

STIPULATIONS OF SEPARATION

21. According to the Lord, if a woman departs (separates) from her husband, what are her only two options?

[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 _____ _____, or _____ _____ to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." *1 Corinthians 7:10, 11*

Note: *The scriptures do permit married couples to separate. Indeed, there are circumstances where separation is the best viable option for a married couple. For example, in order to preserve the safety of a spouse and/or their children, separation is definitely permissible. The Bible does not stipulate the length of time a separation should last as it will vary depending on the circumstances. However, it must be noted that separation and divorce are two totally different experiences and should never be confused.*

COUNSEL FOR A BELIEVER MARRIED TO AN UNBELIEVING SPOUSE

22. What counsel does Paul give to a believing husband who may desire to divorce his unbelieving wife? What counsel does he give to a believing wife who desires to divorce an unbeliever?

[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, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. [13]And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *1 Corinthians 7:12, 13*

Note: *Christians are counseled not to divorce or leave an unbelieving spouse who desires to remain married to them.*

23. What word does Paul use to explain that the "marital status" is valid when a believer marries an unbeliever?

"For the unbelieving husband is _____ by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is _____ by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." *1 Corinthians 7:14*

Note: *The "marital status" of a Christian who is legally married to an unbeliever is valid in God's sight. Although the Christian and unbeliever are unequally yoked, they are married in the biblical sense. Furthermore, their children were birthed in the context of holy matrimony and it is unwise to break up an existing family because of religious differences. According to Paul, the unbeliever is sanctified by the believing spouse. The unbelieving spouse may be won by the godly life of their believing spouse.*

ABANDONMENT

24. What counsel does the apostle Paul give if an unbelieving spouse willfully leaves a believing spouse?

"But if the unbelieving depart, _____ _____ _____. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." *1 Corinthians 7:15*

"Scripture recognizes adultery and fornication (Matt. 5:32) and abandonment by an unbelieving partner (1 Cor. 7:10-15) as grounds for divorce." *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, 19th Revised Edition 2015, p. 157.*

REMARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE

Note: *The scriptures do not directly address or expound upon the issue of remarriage after divorce. However, Jesus does permit the innocent spouse to remarry after a divorce is finalized legally (Matthew 19:9).*

SUMMARY

Marriage is a sacred institution that was established in the Garden of Eden for the companionship and benefit of mankind. Marriage is a life-long loving commitment between a man and a woman and it cannot be easily dissolved in God's sight. Divorce and remarriage is a direct result of sin and it was only permitted due to the hardness of Israel's hearts (Matthew 19:8). Jesus came to elevate marriage, re-establish a correct understanding of this sacred institution, and to further clarify the only way other than death that a Christian marriage is considered non-binding in God's sight.

25. Dear friend, are you willing to accept and heed God's instructions regarding divorce and remarriage? _____

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