

## Does the bible permit putting away a spouse for abuse?

By WmTipton

Actually, it does seem to give grounds for 'putting away' for things like abuse, ect.  
This is the passage in question;

*But to the rest I say, not the Lord, if any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she consents to live with him, let him not leave her. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the husband; else, then, your children are unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbelieving one separates, let them be separated; the brother or the sister is not in bondage in such matters; but God has called us in peace. For what do you know, wife, whether you will save the husband? Or what do you know, husband, whether you will save the wife? (1Co 7:12-16)*

The passage and the context of it was an answer to the Corinthians (See 7:1 "But concerning what you wrote to me") about being able to leave if they were saved and the spouse was not.

They felt that they were 'defiled' in being with this person in the marriage based on other teachings about 'touching no unclean thing' and related passages.

This is why Paul tells them that their children are clean and that their spouse is 'sanctified' (not in a SAVED sense, but just to ease their minds so they didnt divorce) by the saved spouse (1Co 7:14).

These believers were assuming they could just up and leave their existing marriages if they became saved and their spouse had not.

Paul is only showing there that they are not to leave if the unsaved spouse is happy to remain with them in the marriage...dont just divorce them because they are unsaved...we may be instrumental in bringing them to salvation. But Pauls statement IS conditional. If the unbelieving spouse is abusive we DO have right to leave that marriage...ie 'divorce'...which is what LEAVING the marriage is...we would be in the very same 'agamos' state that the woman in 1 Cor 7:10-11 would be...UNmarried.

*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, let him not put her away.*

*And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (1Co 7:12-13)*

The wording there clearly shows that if she is 'pleased' then let him not put her away.  
This statement is conditional.

"if"

G1487

ei i

a primary particle of conditionality;

if, whether, that, etc.:--forasmuch as, if, that, (al-)though, whether. Often used in connection or composition with other particles, especially as in G1489, G1490, G1499, G1508, G1509, G1512, G1513, G1536, G1537. See also G1437.

It doesnt not simply state 'let him not put her away' but adds the condition of being 'pleased' to his not putting her away.

If this were an absolute statement, that he not put her away then it should be stated as such, but its not. A condition is very apparent in the actual text.

So what does this word 'pleased' mean?

#### **G4909**

**1) to be pleased together with, to approve together (with others)**

**2) to be pleased at the same time with, consent, agree to**

**2a) to applaud**

the word clearly shows a mutually pleasant experience.

She is pleased along with him...at the same time....'together'.

If one spouse is being beaten, they would hardly be "pleased together with" the person who is beating them....so why does Paul show the condition of mutual pleasing if there is no condition at all ?

In taking the actual greek into account, we clearly see a condition added to Pauls stating that this man not 'put away' his wife. The condition being that the marriage is pleasing mutually... the greek does not show a one sided thing at all. Paul then shows the same thing in reverse for the believing wife in this situation....

*And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (1Co 7:13)*

"leave him" there is the same as 'put away' in the previous verse.

#### **G863**

**aphie?mi**

**Thayer Definition:**

**1) to send away**

**1a) to bid going away or depart**

**1a1) of a husband divorcing his wife**

**1b) to send forth, yield up, to expire**

**1c) to let go, let alone, let be**

**1c1) to disregard**

**1c2) to leave, not to discuss now, (a topic)**

**1c2a) of teachers, writers and speakers**

**1c3) to omit, neglect**

**1d) to let go, give up a debt, forgive, to remit**

**1e) to give up, keep no longer**

**2) to permit, allow, not to hinder, to give up a thing to a person**

**3) to leave, go way from one**

**3a) in order to go to another place**

**3b) to depart from any one**

**3c) to depart from one and leave him to himself so that all mutual claims are abandoned**

**3d) to desert wrongfully**

**3e) to go away leaving something behind**

**3f) to leave one by not taking him as a companion**

**3g) to leave on dying, leave behind one**

**3h) to leave so that what is left may remain, leave remaining**

**3i) abandon, leave destitute**

The context of 'divorce' as a whole in scripture is either the casting out of a spouse or the leaving of a marriage with the intent of 'putting away' that marriage (altho there are some who try to pretend the two are not the same intent)

For a bit of proof that this is consistently the case, we jump back up to verse 7:11 and see that this woman who has departed her marriage is deemed 'unmarried' by Paul....Agamos/single/unwed/ARAMOC

**G22**

**agamos**

**Thayer Definition:**

**1) unmarried, unwedded, single**

I think the greek makes it very clear that in a situation where a believer is married to an unbeliever who is abusing them that the condition above that Paul presents does give 'grounds' for divorcing the spouse (leaving the marriage)

Pauls condition of if it is "pleased" (meaning mutually) is the 'grounds' for putting away this spouse if they are abusing and its not pleasing.

The "leaving" of the believer would cause them to be "agamos" or unwed/single/unmarried according to Paul thus showing that they are quite divorced when they left with that intent.

In a case of two believers tho, there is a call to reconcile or remain unmarried.

Of course, some folks move on because they no longer wish to be abused and it is very easily argued that if a man can continually and repeatedly batter his wife then he is not showing evidence of actually being a believer/follower of Christ based on the fact that CHRIST shows that we will know men by their fruits.

Those in Corinth were putting away a spouse when they became born again, even if the marriage was otherwise fine. Paul tells them in this passage to not end their marriages simply because they found Christ and their spouse had not. If the marriage is ok otherwise, if it is 'pleased'...then do not put away this spouse but stay with them because the believers influence might be used to bring salvation to this person.

The conditional statement made by Paul clearly shows that there might be a situation whereby the believer may put away this spouse.

If the marriage is abusive it is hardly mutually 'pleased' and as such the condition is not being met as presented by Paul.

Regardless of what some teach, there ARE conditions whereby divorce is permissible and as such is not 'sin' for the one carrying the divorce out. Just as we know the Lord God did not 'sin' against an adulterous Israel when He gave her a bill of divorce.