

The Conditional Marriage Covenant

The truth about Marriage, divorce and remarriage (MDR)

By WmTipton

Welcome to our marriage studies.

Let me start by saying that in my extensive studies over the last years I've concluded that marriage is so intertwined with man, God and our faith and His word that they cannot be separated. Covenants, such as the marriage covenant, are an inherent aspect of the whole of God's creation and to understand covenants and how they work, what they mean to God, is to better know and understand God and His truth.

What is presented in these studies is given in a sincere effort to save as many marriages as is possible, and to save what God loves more, the human being themselves, where necessary.

1.0

First and foremost, I am not trying to push divorce. God hates divorce, that is scriptural fact.

This site is mostly to refute and explain the many arguments that arise during debates about divorce and remarriage. This information is for everyone, but mostly those of you who are divorced and remarried for scriptural reasons. Or for those who divorced even for unscriptural reasons in the past who are now under a new marital covenant.

Our goal isn't to promote divorce, but to keep current second and third marriages from being destroyed by false teachings in the church. We show conclusive proof that while God does hate divorce, Jesus' exception is just one piece of evidence that shows that God does permit divorce for justifiable causes and once divorced for those causes, remarriage is assumed.

We in no way are arguing for divorce one way or another, except where it is permitted by God, and then only when it is apparent that there is no other recourse. If you have deserted your spouse for no just cause, and you have not remarried, you are hereby urged to return to your marriage and try to reconcile that relationship as a follower of our Lord Jesus.

God has said that He hates putting away and that is what we should try to avoid if at all possible.

Also, you will surely notice that my arguments seem 'legalist' in nature in the entire MDR study section. The reasoning for this is multifold.

Firstly we are arguing against those who are legalists to the core and only understand spiritless legalism themselves, and so any presentation of the concept of 'grace' to these folks has been continually rejected. These have no grasp of Jesus' words from OT scripture "I desired mercy and not sacrifice".

Secondly to remove any emotionalism from my own arguments. Over the course of the last few years I've made the mistake of using my own life's details just to show an example of what I'm presenting and invariably those of these lying, homewrecking doctrines will pervert what is said into either my using my own situation to argue my case or that I'm twisting scripture to suit my own needs.

As a result I no longer will use my own life, nor will I allow anyone else to use it in the discussion on any forum, including our own, during any MDR discussion/debate.

Like true legalists the issue will be presented from the cold, hard letter of the law as a whole, which during the last 2-3 years I've found is quite effective entirely by itself in refuting this nonsense that remarriage is never permitted while the former spouse lives.

2.0

The divorce / remarriage issue is one of the most argued topics today among Christians. Among the remarkably varied beliefs there are a great many variances even within a given doctrine. An example would be the "fornication" (Greek "porneia" (strong's g4202) issue.

Here are a few of the differing ideas on what "porneia/fornication" is believed to be by those of the anti-remarriage camp(S)....

1) Some of the anti-remarriage doctrines teach that this **ONLY** applies to Jews, even today, and that divorce was never permitted among the gentiles.

2) Some state the same, that it was for the Jews alone, but now has evolved into a matter of unlawful **PRE**marital sex for all people, Jew or gentile.

3) Other believe it only applies to a person who is either divorced and remarried themselves or married to a divorced person, that they are in "fornication" by Jesus' words and putting away is permitted under these conditions.

4) Another group actually claims that "fornication" is ONLY incestuous marriages for which Jesus is giving permission to divorce. But that would mean that in Acts 15 that the Jerusalem council was ONLY prohibiting sex with ones blood relatives and omitting the multitude of other sexual sins possible (bestiality, prostitution, etc).

5) One of the newest additions to the list of "fornicators" is one I just found where "fornication" is said to be "miscegenation", or the interbreeding of races (so now I guess God is sending folks to hell if one parent was Jewish and the other spanish (/sarcasm)

6) Even others admit that "fornication" in Matthew 5 and 19 is adultery, as we believe, but that Jesus isnt permitting remarriage under ANY circumstances.. I'm sure we can add to the list above, but you get my point.

They all agree that divorce and remarriage is ALWAYS sin, but they can't quite seem to agree on the details of the sin. Surely while they are bicker about the specifics, the rest of us have to just watch on in disbelief as they each struggle to prove exactly what is being said about what.

Among these folks, we get those who seem to just be unable to put all the details together to see the big picture, thus making sense that fornication or "whoredom" has always been a punishable breach of the marriage covenant, but we also get those who seem to be intentionally distorting or purposefully leaving out details hoping that no one bothers to check them on their folly.

In these and other cases we see a subtle twist on the details. Such as stating that John the Baptist was preaching this teaching against Herod and Herodias. But when we see that John was preaching against them before Jesus was even baptised and began to teach, we see that John was accusing them with Mosaic law that Herod was in direct defiance of on at least 2 blatant points (Lev 18:6 and Lev. 18:16). Jesus had not yet taught when John started to accuse Herod... John was not using any teaching of Christ's to condemn him.

The bigger issue with Herod and Herodias is that they had also put away their spouses for no lawful reason (see Josephus chapter book 18 chapter 5-8)...aka frivolous divorce. These two conspired to put away their current spouses and marry each other. Jesus and Moses both were dealing with this situation of frivolous divorce with the Jews.

God's law in Exodus 21 gives a lawful reason that a wife might leave her marriage (being deprived of food, clothing or conjugal duty by her husband).

But Moses had also permitted divorce outside what scripture had called for by allowing men to put their wives away 'for every cause' ("some uncleanness") and then later tried to get it under control by adding to God's law a regulation to these frivolous divorces in Deut 24:1-4.

Yet others pull stunts like trying to equate our "engagement" to Jewish betrothal thereby making unlawful betrothal sex (punishable by death) into a unlawful PREmarital sex, then twisting it to say that Joseph was putting Mary away for PREmarital sex. The betrothal period was NOT a premarital engagement. Joseph and Mary never consummated before Jesus was born. If the case was that they weren't "married" then that means Jesus was not legitimately born within the confines of a "lawful" marriage, doesn't it? Betrothal WAS lawful, binding marriage ... which is precisely why Joseph was going to put Mary away (divorce her) quietly before home-taking had even occurred. There is no provision for putting away a woman who isn't a virgin by a husband, the punishment called for in the law was death, period. (Deut 22)

There are somewhere between 12-50 different errant doctrines all that should be in agreement on most of the details but aren't (as I explained above). I'm having a hard time pinning down an exact number because I don't want to exaggerate a difference between two teachings on the matter, but needless to say, the ONLY thing they will agree on is they don't believe in divorce and remarriage for any reason.

In the following I'd like to present refutations to each of the absurdities given as reasons why there is never any permission for remarriage by the divorced person. I've tried to cover most of the issues brought up repeatedly, and hopefully these will be self-explanatory.

What I am attempting to do is dispel the nonsense put forth that seems to be willing to attempt any distortion of the text possible to make the simple statement "except for fornication" mean anything other than what it does.

As you read, try to work ALL that is presented here together. All the details need to be taken into account so that we understand completely what Jesus meant by "except for fornication (harlotry, whoredom, sexual sin) and not get lost, as many do, in a partial verse here and there that dont include the whole teaching on this matter.

The fact is the text says what it does. Jesus made an exception to the rules when it comes to divorce and remarriage. Its as simple as that, no matter what crazy assertions you see presented by folks on the internet and abroad.

MDR Evidence
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The Studies in this section are not meant individually as 'proof' of what we believe concerning marriage/divorce/remarriage, but as smaller bits of evidence that fit like jigsaw pieces into the whole to make a visible picture. Meaning that in order to see the bigger picture, its necessary to fit them in altogether most of the time. There are a great many errant teachings within the Christian realm that many times are based on an errant understanding of a limited set of passages (sometime even one verse is used). We personally believe that true knowledge of God comes when a person has learned to harmonize the whole, instead of picking out a few passages to base doctrine on, then dismissing other passages that as a whole refute those few.

The fact is we have Jesus giving an exception twice in scripture when speaking about divorce/remarriage. It isnt a matter of proving what He has allowed, or His intent that remarriage IS also part of His statement, since that is clear to all but the blind and illiterate, but of what His intent is when He says 'except for fornication'. Scripture as a whole backs the idea that He meant sexual immorality of the wife that is being discussed with, oddly enough, men by our Lord. Men who had a habit, such as Herod (with Herodias), of putting their wives away for no other purpose than to marry another. Jesus was dealing with this hardhearted and unjust putting away just as Moses had in his day with the Jewish men.

In that, we offer these articles as puzzle pieces for the reader to use as they will. These are refutations and responses to common arguments used by some to forbid all remarriage while the former spouse lives.