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PREACHING A BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF MARRIAGE, DIVORCE,  
AND REMARRIAGE AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF  
REEDSBURG, AND BIG SPRING CHURCH  
OF WISCONSIN DELLS, WISCONSIN

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
Robert Charles Brandhagen

May 2015

**APPROVAL SHEET**

PREACHING A BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF MARRIAGE, DIVORCE,  
AND REMARRIAGE AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF  
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To Lisa Ann,  
"You have captivated my heart,  
my sister, my bride"  
(Song of Sol 4:9).

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## PREFACE

Many people deserve thanks for their help bringing this project to completion. First of all, I want to thank my wife, Lisa. How fitting—especially given that this project is about marriage—that she was my chief helper, cheerleader, and confidant. One particular moment was a turning point. She was just arriving home when I met her in the garage and told her I was quitting the D.Min. program at Southern. It happened about two years ago, near the start of the writing phase. She reassured and galvanized me, encouraging me to keep going. She *knew* that I loved to be so challenged, to learn so much, to use the things I learned to benefit the churches. She *knew* that to finish this degree was a major goal of mine. She *knew* that I began the same program at another seminary fifteen years ago, made it half way through a second class, and had to quit. No quitting this time. I am so grateful to my wife, not just for our garage consultation, but for her love, respect, service, wisdom, and kindness to me.

The congregations at First Baptist Church and Big Spring Church gave me all I needed to make this project successful. They prioritized an education fund for me, so there was no financial burden. They allowed me all the time I needed to study, not just for sermons each week, but also for the classes and project I am now completing. It is hard to imagine a situation in which the people of God could be more kind, patient, loving, and gracious to their pastor. The churches are small, and we are a family. They know I personally have a large family, and they allow me the time I need to tend to their needs, and to attend their events. They put no pressure on me. Not many pastors are so blessed. Within the two congregations I especially wish to thank the twenty-eight people who participated in the sermon phase of the project, the retreat phase, or both. It takes a degree of humility to submit oneself to such a study; it meant a lot to me that these were

willing to be a part of this large undertaking.

Our children are such a blessing to me. They helped with this project by being my personal secretaries (sorting, stapling . . .) and by encouraging me. Even our older children who live on their own helped by being interested, praying, and frequently asking how “The Project” was coming along. My mother has been living with us the past couple of years, after the death of my father, and she too has been a great encouragement.

Nobody thinks I am smarter than my mother does; I am “The Real Deal!”

I am grateful to the Lord for what I learned in the classroom from professors T. J. Betts, Bill Cook, Barry Joslin, Brian Payne, Robert Vogel, and Hershael York. The help and advice I received from my faculty supervisor, Rob Plummer, were excellent. His proverb “there is beauty in brevity” will never be forgotten. Those five words trimmed the fat from chapter 2—it was almost *seventy* pages—until it was a leaner, more efficient forty pages. I also want to thank Michael Wilder, Miguel Ecchevaria, and Jessica McMichael in the Professional Doctoral Studies office, for their assistance. I am grateful to Dalibor (Dan) Bjelich for his technical expertise, and to Marsha Omanson and Betsy Fredrick for their expertise in editing this project.

Though I actively sought nearly a dozen pastors to review my sermons, only one was able to review and fill out surveys on all eight sermons. That reviewer was Ross Layne, who completed a Ph.D. program at Southern Seminary over ten years ago. He is a humble shepherd who loves the Lord God with his mind. I also wish to thank pastors Keith Hunholz, David Mundt, and Clark Peterson for their friendship, encouragement, and help during the classroom and project phases of the program. I wish to thank friend and college professor, Jamey Simmons, who has many papers to read, but took the time to read mine. Pastor John Kermott, a close friend since 1983, helped in various phases of the program and project. Barry Vegter, another pastor, was not directly involved in this project, but his friendship over three decades, and his investment in my marriage warrant my gratitude.

Jon Sweetland and his wife, Debbie, have also been friends for the past thirty-plus years. They live just a few miles from the seminary and extended wonderful hospitality during my trips to Louisville. An anonymous benefactor even paid for an evening meal at Logan's Roadhouse for our entire class. I wonder who that could have been!

Above all, thanks be to the Lord God, and “to Him be the glory in the church” (Eph 3:21)!

Bob Brandhagen

Reedsburg/Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

May 2015

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to explain and apply, through expository preaching, what the Bible says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage at First Baptist Church of Reedsburg, and Big Spring Church of Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

#### **Goals**

The first goal of this project was to evaluate the participants' attitudes, practices, and biblical knowledge regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This goal was measured by means of two surveys given to all participants in the project. The first survey measured attitudes and practices related to marriage, divorce, and remarriage (see appendix 1); the second survey measured biblical knowledge of marriage, divorce, and remarriage (see appendix 2). The two surveys were each taken before the project began and after it was completed in order to measure the change in attitude, practice, and biblical knowledge of the topic. In the case of the first survey, this first goal was deemed successfully met because the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-survey scores (see appendix 19). In the case of the second survey, this first goal was deemed successfully met because post-test results show a positive change over pre-test results (see appendix 20).

The second goal of this project was to develop a biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage by studying Old and New Testament passages with a view to preaching and teaching those passages. This goal was measured by a survey given to theologically trained peers who had read the sermon manuscripts (see appendix 5). Their input was sought as to the accuracy of the theological interpretations and applications

made in the sermon series. With the survey as a rubric, the results of the reviewers' input were used as a measurement of this goal. Further, this goal was deemed successfully met when I was able to explain all of the Scriptures that address marriage, divorce, and remarriage and was aware of and conversant in alternate interpretations (though admittedly, this is an ongoing pursuit).

The third goal of this project was to equip participants by preaching a series of ten sermons, explaining and applying the biblical teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This goal was measured by means of a group interview given to select project participants (who had participated in both the sermon phase and the retreat phase) from the two congregations (see appendix 3). This goal was deemed successfully met given that, having been thus equipped, specific and agreed upon individual and corporate actions were taken to bring the biblical perspective to fruition in the life of the churches.

The fourth goal of this project was to further equip participants by teaching from a handbook of eight lessons to reinforce and strengthen the biblical knowledge, attitude, and practice of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This handbook comprised the content of a weekend retreat. This goal was measured by means of individual exit interviews with participants (see appendix 4). This goal was deemed successfully met since, in each individual participant's handbook as well as in each exit interview, there were specific application points pertaining to attitudes, practices, and biblical knowledge regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

### **Ministry Context**

First Baptist Church of Reedsburg, and Big Spring Church of Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, participated in this project. For the past fourteen years at First Baptist Church and for the past three years at Big Spring Church, biblical exposition has characterized the preaching. While biblical exposition is the norm for the vast majority of sermons, occasional topical sermons on family life have had a place as well. However, neither church has had a sustained, intentional series focusing on marriage, divorce, and

remarriage in particular. This project sought to address that deficiency.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the number of divorces per 1,000 persons in Wisconsin in 2010 (the most recent year available) was 3.0. The highest in the United States was Nevada (5.9); the lowest was Iowa (2.4)<sup>1</sup> According to “Wisconsin Marriages and Divorces,” published in June of 2012, the divorce rate for Wisconsin in 1920 was 0.9 per 1,000 persons. In 2011 the rate was 2.9 per 1,000 persons, having peaked in 1980 at 3.7 per 1,000 persons<sup>2</sup> In other words, divorce has more than tripled in frequency over the past nine decades in Wisconsin.

First Baptist Church is located in Sauk County. According to “Selected Social Characteristics in the United States 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” in Sauk County, Wisconsin, 10.0 percent of males age fifteen and over and 11.7 percent of females age fifteen and over were projected to be divorced. Of the same population of males, 57.2 percent were projected to be “now married, except separated,” and 55.2 percent of the same population of females were projected to be “now married, except separated.”<sup>3</sup>

Big Spring Church is located in Adams County. According to “Selected Social Characteristics in the United States 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” in Adams County, Wisconsin, 14.3 percent of males age fifteen and over and 10.4 percent of females age fifteen and over were projected to be divorced. Of the same population of males, 52.8 percent were projected to be “now married, except separated,”

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<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control, “Divorce Rates by State,” accessed November 28, 2012, [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/divorce\\_rates\\_90\\_95\\_99-11.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/divorce_rates_90_95_99-11.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>Wisconsin Department of Health Services, “Wisconsin Marriages and Divorces,” accessed November 28, 2012, <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P4/P45359-11.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup>United States Census Bureau, “Selected Social Characteristics in the United States 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” accessed November 28, 2012, [http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/11\\_5YR/DP02/0500000US55111](http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/11_5YR/DP02/0500000US55111).

and 60.9 percent of the same population of females were projected to be “now married, except separated.”<sup>4</sup>

At First Baptist Church, of the 24 adults responding to a survey, 8 have been divorced. The divorce rate among respondents is 33.33 percent. None responded as having been married three-plus times. At Big Spring Church, of the 22 adults responding to a survey, 13 have been divorced. The divorce rate among respondents is 59.09 percent. Five responded as having been married three-plus times, with at least one of those previous marriages ending in divorce.

### **Rationale**

That divorce is a major issue in Wisconsin at the state and county levels, and in the two churches in particular, is clear from the statistics. God’s people need to understand the biblical perspective on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. With a firm grasp of God’s Word as it addresses these matters, important decisions regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage can be carefully reflected upon and made.

The churches needed this project for three reasons. First, as seen, issues of marriage, divorce, and remarriage have not been addressed in a comprehensive, sustained, expository manner at these churches within the past decade, or longer. Second, when surveyed, the churches were found to have high divorce rates. Third, marriages are struggling among God’s professing people. The churches will reap bountifully from the preaching of God’s Word as it is sown and as it declares God’s will regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. For too long the people of God have been filled with the frivolous din of worldly perspectives on marriage from the movies, music, and magazines of popular culture—and even from some pulpits. Many spouses end their marriages citing “irreconcilable differences.” Is there any word from God to counter these worldly

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<sup>4</sup>United States Census Bureau, “Selected Social Characteristics in the United States 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,” accessed November 28, 2012, [http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/11\\_5YR/DP02/0500000US55001](http://factfinder2.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/11_5YR/DP02/0500000US55001).

perspectives? Yes, there is! As the churches hear the preaching of God’s Word concerning marriage, great benefit can be derived, even a resulting cycle of repentance and faith at the individual and community levels, for the glory of God and for the good of church, family, and society.

Some may protest, “Why use the medium of preaching and teaching to accomplish this great benefit?” John Stott puts the matter this way: “Nothing seemed more important to them (both Calvin in Geneva, and the English Reformers) than that the pastors should *preach* (emphasis mine) the pure word of God and that the people should hear it.”<sup>5</sup> Stott continues by quoting John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury: “Despise not, good brethren, despise not to hear God’s word declared. As you tender your own souls, be diligent to come to sermons; for that is the ordinary place where . . . hearts be moved, and God’s secrets be revealed.”<sup>6</sup>

In summary, the ministry context into which this project entered was one in which, in recent history, there had not been sustained, intentional preaching on marriage and family life in general, nor on marriage, divorce, and remarriage in particular. Instances of marital difficulties, divorce, and remarriage are common, touching everyone directly or indirectly. Because divorce statistics were high and biblical knowledge of these matters was low, this project was urgently needed. Put even more bluntly, this project was necessary because marriages and families had suffered or were suffering, and God’s people often did not know what God says to do, whether before, during, or after the fact.

### **Definitions**

*Expository preaching.* As defined by Haddon Robinson, expository preaching is

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<sup>5</sup>John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 119.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.<sup>7</sup>

*Marriage.* Marriage is defined as “the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

This project was limited by the willingness, accuracy, and nonbiased participation of the participants—that they were not changing their behavior because they were part of a study. Thus the results of this project were limited by the degree of such accuracy and lack of bias.<sup>9</sup> This project was also limited by its fifteen week duration.

This project was delimited by the requirement that in order to be included, participants agreed to be accurate and unbiased, and to participate in the study until it was concluded. Excluded were those who could not (agree to) be unbiased, or who did not have the ability to accurately report the data requested, or who could not commit to the whole project. A second delimitation is that the only content included in this project was sermon content and instrumentation that has been reviewed by theologically-trained reviewers for accuracy, relevance, and excellence. Excluded was sermon content and instrumentation that had not been thus reviewed.<sup>10</sup> A third delimitation of this project was that with regard to those formerly married, only the area of former marriage through divorce was addressed specifically. The situations of those whose marriages ended due to

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<sup>7</sup>Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 20.

<sup>8</sup>Merriam-Webster, “Marriage,” accessed February 13, 2013, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/marriage?show=0&t=1360816051>.

<sup>9</sup>BOLD Educational Software, “Writing the Limitations and Delimitations,” accessed February 12, 2013, <http://bold-ed.com/barrc/limitations.htm>.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

widowhood or annulment were not directly addressed, though the teaching on remarriage was relevant in many ways to people in those situations.

## CHAPTER 2

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR PREACHING A BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

#### **Introduction**

The thesis of this chapter was that five passages from both Testaments reveal the mind and will of God as it pertains to marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The passages are addressed sequentially, revealing God’s mind through His progressive revelation.

#### **Creation Ordinance Perspective on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (Gen 2:18-25)**

Genesis 2:18-25 presents the Lord God’s perspective on marriage from the earliest stages of human history. It is clear that the “alone” status of man is not good and that God made the woman to be a helper for the man. A husband is to leave his parents, hold fast to his wife, and become one flesh with her in an exclusive, unashamed relationship.

#### **The Journey from “Not Good” to “No Shame” (2:18-25)**

Victor Hamilton notes that everything from Genesis 1:1 to 2:17 received a positive review from God: good or very good. What is “not good” (לֹא-טוֹב) is Adam’s lack of a corresponding companion. Everything in Genesis 1-2, except God, needs something to bring it to completion and full function. God renders the judgment that man’s aloneness is not good. Adam is not consulted. However, God does not just evaluate; He also rectifies. His cure is the provision of a suitable helper (עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ) for

Adam; the new creature will correspond to the man.<sup>1</sup>

Derek Kidner remarks that the suitable helper Adam needs is a human being on his own level. Accordingly, the woman is given “as his partner and counterpart.”<sup>2</sup> Walter Brueggemann brings a unique perspective, noting that in this “sharp secularization of the human creature” found in Genesis 2:18-25, God is not man’s helper, though elsewhere in Scripture God is indeed man’s helper (Ps 121:1; Isa 41:10). Here however, the help man needs must come from “earthlings.” “That the helper must be creature not creator shows to what extent creation is left to its own resources and expected to honor its vocation, explore its freedom, and respect the prohibition.”<sup>3</sup> Brueggemann also notes that the story in Genesis 2:18-25 moves along systematically: being alone is not helpful, God will not be the needed helper, nor will animals provide the help the man needs. Brueggemann brings a joyful conclusion to this point:

None of the known elements will suffice. There must be a newness. The good news of the episode is that the well-being of the man requires a fresh creative act of God. The emergence of woman is as stunning and unpredicted as the previous surprising emergence of the man. The woman is also God’s free creation. Now the two creatures of surprise belong together. The place of the garden is for this covenanted human community of solidarity, trust, and well-being. They are *one!* That is, in covenant (2:24). The garden exists as a context for the human community.<sup>4</sup>

Hamilton remarks that Israel’s neighboring nations had no traditions or accounts of a separate creation of the female. In the Bible the woman is not subsumed under the man. Genesis 1:27 informs that one would be male, one female, both image-bearers of God.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 175.

<sup>2</sup>Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 1 (London: Tyndale, 1967), 65.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 47.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 176-77.

Regarding the man “leaving” his parents, Waltke and Fredricks comment that the present passage was written as a corrective to societies that prioritize a man’s bonds with his parents over his bonds of marriage. Holding fast to one’s wife is “the language of covenant commitment. Marriage depicts God’s relationship to His people (Hos 2:14-23; Eph 5:22-32).”<sup>6</sup> Hamilton also focuses on the verbs. “Leave” or “forsake” (יָעַזַב) often describes how Israel has rejected her covenant relationship with Yahweh. By contrast, “united,” or “cling” (וָדָבַק) frequently refers to the maintenance of the relationship called for in the covenant. So, for a man to leave his parents and cling to his wife is to cut off one loyalty and begin another. Already, in just the second chapter of the Bible, Scripture trumpets forth that marriage is not “an *ad-hoc*, makeshift arrangement”—it is a covenant. Thus joined by covenant, they become one flesh.<sup>7</sup>

Both Adam and Eve were naked (עָרוּמִים) without shame (לֹא יָתְבַשְׁשׁוּ). Waltke and Fredricks comment further,

In this ideal state, man and woman view their person and sexuality with wholeness and thus feel no shame in their nakedness. Here their nakedness is an image of openness and trust. With the loss of innocence (at) the Fall (of mankind into sin), they will feel shame and temptation and so need to protect their vulnerability by the barrier of clothing (Gen 3:7).<sup>8</sup>

Hamilton highlights the uniqueness of the nakedness mentioned here, noting that apart from Genesis 2:25, everywhere else in the OT nakedness involves some kind of humiliation or guilt.<sup>9</sup> John Walton notes it is traditionally recognized that Adam and Eve have nothing to hide from one another and no one from whom they must hide. They have no shame because they have no guilt, and are secure in themselves and each other.<sup>10</sup> An

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<sup>6</sup>Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 88-90.

<sup>7</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 180, 181.

<sup>8</sup>Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 88-90.

<sup>9</sup>Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 181.

<sup>10</sup>John H. Walton, *Genesis, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,

alternate view, says Walton, is that the description of 2:25 indicates a prepubescent state. Being childlike and innocent, they see no need for clothing; they are “unaware of their sexuality.”<sup>11</sup>

Walton continues by pointing out that Genesis 2:25 links its own chapter with the next, providing a transition. Human nakedness is set in contrast to the serpent’s craftiness. Their nakedness indicates a certain naiveté. It is the “before” picture that must be seen next to the “after” picture of Genesis 3:7<sup>12</sup> (“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves”).

Kidner finds four main emphases in Genesis 2:18-25. First, man was created prior to woman (1 Cor 11:8, 9; 1 Tim 2:13). Second, the sexes complement each other. Third, the language of the biblical text indicates an exclusive, permanent, God-sealed bond, for “God himself, like a father of the bride, leads the woman to the man.”<sup>13</sup> Fourth, in God’s true template Adam and Eve have “perfect ease between them” (v. 25), not alloyed with greed, distrust, or dishonor. Regarding Genesis 2:24, “the order [is] ‘leaving’ before ‘cleaving;’ marriage, nothing less, before intercourse. So this question, as well as divorce, was settled ‘from the beginning’ (Mark 10:6ff.).”<sup>14</sup>

### **Legal Perspective on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (Deut 24:1-5)**

Deuteronomy 24:1-5 addresses a specific situation in which there is a marriage, divorce, remarriage, then another divorce put upon the woman, along with a

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2001), 179.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Kidner, *Genesis*, 65-66, quoting Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1973), 82.

<sup>14</sup>Kidner, *Genesis*, 66.

prohibition of remarrying the first husband. Neglect of this prohibition has covenantal significance, as sin is thus brought on the land of inheritance.

### **On Indecency, Divorce, Defilement, and that Which is Detestable (24:1-5)**

J. G. McConville states that apart from this passage there is no other law concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage in the OT. The practice of divorce is presupposed (see Deut 22:19, 29), and in this practice the husband had many rights. He initiated the divorce. Correct procedure was necessary in anticipation of the prohibited case, but a general law concerning divorce is by no means seen here.<sup>15</sup> Christopher Wright indicates that most of the laws in Deuteronomy 24 put a harness on greed and exploitation so that the needy are protected. The eighth and tenth commandments (do not steal, do not covet) seem linked to this passage. Divorce in Moses' time is "a matter of internal family law" and did not involve the elders of the city (civil authorities) to weigh in on the grounds or causes of the divorce.<sup>16</sup> Eugene Merrill writes that the discussion of divorce and remarriage in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is "much at home" in this context of respecting property and the rights of individuals.<sup>17</sup>

McConville teaches that a husband was never required to divorce his wife. In the present case the husband had chosen to divorce, but the reason is unknown.<sup>18</sup> "Some reason to take offence" (עֲרוֹת דִּבָּר in Deut 24:1) is also used in Deuteronomy 23:12-14 referring to things "shameful" or "indecent" (such as human excrement) that must be

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<sup>15</sup>J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 357.

<sup>16</sup>Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 255.

<sup>17</sup>Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 316.

<sup>18</sup>McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 358.

hidden away from Yahweh's holy presence in the camp of Israel. The usual meaning of עֶרְוֹת is "nakedness," something that should be hidden (Exod 20:26), which brings shame (Isa 47:3). The offense of the woman is not adultery; more severe laws govern that (Deut 22:22). The wife's offence is an unspecified, unacceptable activity.<sup>19</sup> Merrill adds that the great difficulty in Deuteronomy 24:1-5 is that problem is described not explicitly as adultery but as "something indecent about her."<sup>20</sup> It literally reads, "The nakedness of a thing." The noun form means both "nakedness" and "pudenda" (sexual organs). Combining those two meanings is good procedure here: the text is suggesting "the improper uncovering of the private parts."<sup>21</sup>

Duane Christensen adds his perspective, saying it is possible that "something indecent" (Deut 24:1) has to do with exposed genitals on the part of the woman. "It is clear that the interpretation 'something indecent, obnoxious, or shameful' is not far off the mark . . . (but also) defies concrete, objective definition."<sup>22</sup> Most translators and commentators are in agreement that "something indecent" refers to sexually indecent behavior, though not adultery since that would involve the death penalty. This interpretation is the opposite of Daniel I. Block's interpretation. He believes that since it is a woman's problem, the phrase is best seen as a menstrual irregularity (cf. Mark 5:15-34), which brought about a constant state of uncleanness, forbidding sexual activity (cf. Lev 12:2-8), and making her unable to have children. It is possible the husband did not know about her condition until after the marriage took place and he attempted to consummate the marriage. He could have responded to her compassionately, but he

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 316.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 317.

<sup>22</sup>Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10-34:12*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 6 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 566.

instead divorced her.<sup>23</sup>

Another view of “the unclean thing,” proposed by Anthony Garrett, is based on the opinion that “thing” (דָּבָר) should be translated “word” in 24:1. The husband married a virgin. Her sexual awakening by her husband brings out “a latent perversion.” She endeavors to persuade her husband to engage in a perverted sexual practice. This is sexual uncleanness in *words*. It reflects her inward impurity that desires to outwardly manifest in an impure activity or deed (“thing”).<sup>24</sup> Deuteronomy 24:1, written casuistically, allows the husband to file for a divorce for this perversion on the part of his bride. He had refused to engage in the perverse action, so it remained only “unclean words,” for he did not allow things to descend into “unclean things” or deeds, by gratifying her unclean desire.<sup>25</sup>

Wright explains that the “certificate of divorce” (סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוֹת) literally, “a writing of cutting off”) was given “into her hand” (24:1). While the husband probably did not have such noble motives, the certificate was given, in fact required, in order to protect the woman. This document vouched for her status as one free and able to marry another man. Without the certificate she (and he also) could be accused of adultery.<sup>26</sup> Merrill indicates that after the facts of the case were presented and guilt established, the husband was able to pursue a divorce. The proceedings included writing his wife he certificate, putting it in her hand as a symbolic, public witness of the disbanding of the marriage relationship, then sending her away from the family fellowship and all that involved. Thus, according to Merrill, she was “cut off and driven away from home and family, a punishment laden

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<sup>23</sup>Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 557-58.

<sup>24</sup>Anthony J. M. Garrett, “A New Understanding of the Divorce and Remarriage Legislation in Deuteronomy 24:1-4,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2011): 248.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 255.

with indescribable shame and incalculable economic and social loss in that ancient Israelite world.”<sup>27</sup>

McConville reminds the reader that the husband is not criticized for his action of divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. In his opinion, this “presumably means that his action is deemed to be justified.”<sup>28</sup> The second divorce is stated briefly in Deuteronomy 24:2, 3. The second husband’s behavior in divorcing his wife is not evaluated at all. The term used here, however, is the same used of the man making an unjustified accusation in 22:13. While it would be helpful to know whether the second husband was right to divorce her, the more essential point is to define the legal position of the wife prior to the decision in the next verse (24:4). There one finds a law restricting the first husband from remarrying his former wife who has been divorced or widowed from a second husband. The reason: “she has been declared defiled.” The word “defiled” (הִטְמָאָה) is frequently used of cultic impurity, something not acceptable in the sphere of holiness.<sup>29</sup>

Does the “defilement” have its source in whatever caused the first divorce, or from a second marriage after that? Nothing in the laws suggest that divorce and remarriage are the problem in themselves. A new element, however, is introduced with the possibility of the divorced-again or widowed wife returning to her first husband. Craigie believes that such a return would be “in practice a form of legalized adultery”<sup>30</sup> Yaron states, “the

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<sup>27</sup>Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, 316-17.

<sup>28</sup>McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 358.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 358-60. McConville says that the husband’s action in divorce is “presumably . . . justified,” yet he balances that view: “The woman is a victim in the case, and the use of the language of uncleanness trades on the terminology from the realm of adultery in order to show that she has been ill-treated. The first husband, in particular, has forfeited his right to marry her because he shamed her, driving her as a result into a second marriage.” *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>30</sup>P. C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 305.

law protects the second marriage.<sup>31</sup> Pressler writes that this view has to deal with “the difficulty that the prohibition of return to the first husband endures even beyond the death of the second husband.”<sup>32</sup> Pressler then theorizes that restoring the first husband to the wife who has been widowed or divorced a second time would cause the second marriage “adulterous after the fact.”<sup>33</sup> McConville believes Pressler’s theory is strong; the defilement in such an adulterous-after-the-fact case would be the adulterous relationship that the second marriage to the first husband now formed. Yet, McConville goes on to say that this does not explain why the woman is said to be defiled, but not the man, or why the defilement seems to be already established as factual, instead of the woman being defiled by the restoration of the first marriage.<sup>34</sup>

McConville believes the profit motive is more compelling. The present law aimed to protect the woman from being exploited by the first husband. Such a man may have had false and greedy motives in wanting his former wife back, especially if her second marriage had ended—whether by divorce or by death of the husband—with the woman receiving a sum of money.<sup>35</sup> This interpretation is consistent with Braulik’s belief that the law of Deuteronomy 24:4 is in the section of laws deriving from the Eighth Commandment, against stealing.<sup>36</sup>

Christensen indicates that the Torah contains no specific laws on divorce.

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<sup>31</sup>Reuven Yaron, “The Restoration of Marriage,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 17 (1966): 1-11.

<sup>32</sup>Carolyn Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws* (New York: de Gruyter, 1993), 52, 53.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>34</sup>McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 359.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.* This is the view of R. Westbrook, “The Prohibition on Restoration of Marriage in Deuteronomy 24:1-4,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 31 (1986): n.p. Also holding this view are William Heth and Gordon Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce: The Problem with the Evangelical Consensus* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 225-27.

<sup>36</sup>Georg Braulik, *The Theology of Deuteronomy* (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL, 1994), 177.

Perhaps the laws were common knowledge and the law in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 presupposes divorce proceedings as normative legal action. This is likely the case, but the issue here is not so much divorce as it is the meaning of marriage, and the great evil present when divorce occurs. Divorce wreaks havoc everywhere it goes. The original intention of the Torah is that of an inviolable union in marriage. The man must bring his wife happiness (Deut 24:5), though in some cases this is not possible.<sup>37</sup> The law stated in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and expanded in Genesis 20 reveals the consequences of divorce, compounded by its finality. Divorce is a kind of death, and is one of life's moments of ultimate decision. Divorce provides an ending, with no possible way to return to what might have been.<sup>38</sup>

### **Malachi's Perspective on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (Mal 2:10-16)**

Malachi addresses the faithlessness of God's people to one another and the profaning of the covenant and the sanctuary through abominable sins—namely, marriage to the daughter of a foreign god. Malachi also laments “this second thing” that the people were doing—they were weeping over the fact that God did not accept their worship. They wondered why this was so and were told it was because they were dealing treacherously with their wives. Husbands were not loving their wives but divorcing them, a true act of violence.

### **Malachi's Third Disputation Oracle (2:10-16)**

Andrew Hill explains that the literary form of “prophetic disputation” is found in all six oracles in Malachi. In 2:10-16 the disputational format is modified by prefacing the initial declaration (2:11) with three rhetorical questions (2:10). “Yehud [Judah] has

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<sup>37</sup>Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, 568.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

broken faith” (בְּגֵדָה) in 2:11 is highlighted by an oath formula that threatens imprecation: “May Yahweh cut off . . .” (יִכְרֶת) in 2:12, before continuing the declaration in verse 13. Malachi then returns to the interrogative approach in 2:15-16.<sup>39</sup>

Hill points out that scholars agree as to the exceeding difficulty in interpreting Malachi 2:10-16; it is more problematic than all of Malachi’s other oracles. This third disputation purposes to bring about the spiritual restoration of the community, leaders, priests, and people, who are together the “one” people of Yahweh.<sup>40</sup> The oracle is two-fold: it addresses the interwoven sins of mixed marriage and divorce. Both are arrogant and criminal before God, and an affront to faithfulness and loyalty—the very essence of the covenant (בְּרִית) relationship with God and one’s spouse, seen in 2:10 and 2:14. These sins did three things: they fouled the people of Judah, tainted their worship, and made a desecration of Yahweh Himself. The repetition of “one” (אֶחָד) in this disputation underscores that the whole community was the intended audience of the prophet’s message of condemnation and threats of divine judgment.<sup>41</sup>

Hill goes on to explain how this third disputation (2:10-16) concerning *faithlessness in marriage* and the fifth disputation (3:6-12) concerning *faithlessness to God* are “mirror images of disloyalty and betrayal in Yehud [Judah] as correlative literary panels; and both are set upon the hinge of divine judgment threatened in the fourth disputation (2:17-3:5).”<sup>42</sup> The third speech purposes to teach, correcting false attitudes and practices on marriage and divorce, over against the “spurious tutelage”<sup>43</sup> of the

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<sup>39</sup>Andrew E. Hill, *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 25D (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 221.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 223.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

Levitical priests in 2:1-9. It also purposes to admonish, exhorting Judah to careful self-examination in light of the coming formal indictment of Judah in 2:17-3:5, and to preparation for the call to return to God in 3:7.<sup>44</sup>

Pieter Verhoef admonishes that when the spiritual leaders of God's people fail to adhere to the high demands of their calling, moral decline is the inevitable result, manifesting itself in marital malpractices, among other things.<sup>45</sup> It is noteworthy, therefore, that the prophet's judgment, which was mainly upon the priests (1:6-2:9), is now projected toward the misconduct of the people in the arena of marriage. The tenor of this prophecy is consistent with the previous one in Malachi 2—to address another area in which God's people insulted and denied God's love for them.<sup>46</sup>

Verhoef asserts that when the covenant people are joined to one another through faith in the one true God, the insertion of a foreign god (אֱלֹהֵי נֶכֶר) severely violates this intimate connection.<sup>47</sup> There is a similarity between this prophecy (2:10-16) and the one before it (2:10-12). In both cases there is one main transgression, and in both cases having the same "aggravating circumstance"—namely, that the violator is at the same time indulging in religious activities. The divorcee is the very one who "covers his clothing with violence" (2:16b). He is zealous about the slaughter of sacrificial animals; his clothes are spattered with their blood. Professed piety combined with profound transgression is detestable to God (2:11), and is something which God hates (2:16a).<sup>48</sup> Many in the church today are guilty of having violated their wedding vows, who have not

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 224.

<sup>45</sup>Pieter A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 263.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 264.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 265.

sought repentance and forgiveness, who have not undergone church discipline, and yet still flatter themselves that they are serving the Lord.

Joyce Baldwin covers possible themes for the oracle of Malachi 2:10-16. The prophet starts in verse 10, questioning the "nation as one family." In verses 11-12 the nation is seen "as a spiritual family." Then in verses 13-16, "individual family life"<sup>49</sup> within the nation is addressed. Along with family, another possible theme may be covenant loyalty, a sermon with ready-made illustrations of unfaithfulness in the audience itself.<sup>50</sup>

In Malachi 2:10 the question is posed, "Has not one God created us?" The concepts of fatherhood and creation are purposely paired, as they are in Deuteronomy 32:6 and Isaiah 64:8. The question is posed in verse 10: "Why then are we faithless . . . ?" This phrase denotes the disregarding of promises and agreements in business, marriage, or society in general. By contrast, the upright person "keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind" (Ps 15:4c). Sinful, selfish behavior had profaned the covenant.<sup>51</sup>

Baldwin moves from general to particular in 2:11, where Malachi addresses a practice that had long sabotaged the spirit of Israel—marriage to a woman of foreign cultural and religious devotion. The objection to intermarriage was not based on racial concerns. When Israel left Egypt it was with a mixed multitude (Exod 12:38), naturalized into the nation by means of circumcision and keeping the Passover, giving evidence of their commitment to Israel's God (Exod 12:48; Num 9:14).<sup>52</sup> "The daughter of a foreign

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<sup>49</sup>Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 28 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1972), 237.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 237-38.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 238.

god” implied the would-be wife bore the character of that god, a god opposed to the perfections of Israel’s God, which would lead to compromise. Apostasy had brought about exile and captivity for Judah, so to put the community at risk again was unthinkable.<sup>53</sup>

Malachi prays in 2:12 that God will erase evil from the land by giving the offenders no posterity, no heirs, no children to take his sin to another generation.<sup>54</sup> In 2:13 the prophet points out more unfaithfulness on the part of Judah. First, however, he answers their excessive emotional displays, perhaps intended to sway God into answering their long-standing prayers. Weeping and wailing would not help their case because there was moral wrongdoing preventing access to God: marriage vows were being broken (2:14). The Law of Hammurabi viewed marriage as a documented legal contract; Israel’s God viewed marriage as a covenant (בְּרִית) with God Himself as witness (Gen 31:50; Prov 2:17). With God as witness the covenant was yet more binding.<sup>55</sup>

Malachi 2:15 is difficult to interpret; it has suffered interpretations by scribes who likely were offended by its teaching. The interpretation of this text must agree with the intention of Malachi, seen at the end of the verse: that husbands stay with, and stay true to, their first wife.<sup>56</sup> God made the two into one flesh (Gen 2:24) for the very purpose of giving them godly offspring. Exactly “because a divine institution was being threatened,”<sup>57</sup> Malachi implored that no man be faithless to the wife of his youth.

In the final verse of the passage (Mal 2:16), Baldwin deals with Malachi’s divorce metaphor—that divorce is a covering of one’s garment with violence. This figure

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 238.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 239.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 240.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 241.

connotes all sorts of “gross injustice which, like the blood of a murdered victim, leave their mark for all to see.”<sup>58</sup> Malachi 2:15b and 16b both admonish, “So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful” (תִּבְגְּדוּ), or do not “deal treacherously.” The best interests of spouses, children, churches, and communities are served when families are not broken by divorce. אֲנִי שֹׂאֵת אֶת הַדִּיּוּרִים can be translated (the LORD speaking), “I hate divorce,” or “the one who hates and divorces.”<sup>59</sup> Either way, violence has been done to the covenant, the church, the family, and especially the children. It is vital to recognize what things God hates and hate those things also, and strive against them. Finally, Malachi’s call and plea prepares the way for Jesus’ teaching in the NT (Matt 5:31-32; 19:4-9).<sup>60</sup>

### **Jesus’ Perspective on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (Matt 19:3-12)**

Jesus is approached by the Pharisees who test Him with questions on divorce. He addresses and corrects them, going where they never went: Genesis 2. Jesus’ friends, having heard what He told the Pharisees, discuss with Jesus the prospect of singleness.

### **Creation Ordinance versus Later Ad Hoc Law on Divorce (19:3-8)**

Comments by R. T. France begin the discussion of marriage, divorce, and remarriage from a NT perspective. Matthew 19 is unique and important as Jesus sets His teaching in a hermeneutical argument against the Pharisees, who adhere to current Jewish theology pertaining to divorce.<sup>61</sup> In discussing Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (the scriptural foundation for all Jewish instruction on divorce) in connection with Genesis 1-2 (God’s

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 714.

original plan for marriage), Jesus raised a fundamental hermeneutical issue. In the Pentateuch there are two levels of instruction on ethics. In Deuteronomy 24:1-4 there is a “pragmatic provision” addressing a problem that had come up, but in Genesis 1-2 there is “a positive statement of first principles which, if observed, would have rendered the trouble-shooting legislation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 unnecessary.”<sup>62</sup> The original principle (in Genesis) takes priority “over the later concession to human weakness”<sup>63</sup> (in Deuteronomy). Given that the creation ordinance trumps the concessive legislation, it can be concluded that the Jewish teaching that took Deuteronomy 24:1-4 as the bedrock for its instruction on divorce started in the wrong place.<sup>64</sup>

France continues by noting that the Pharisees are concerned about Jesus’ teaching on the permanence of marriage because divorce was prevalent in first century Jewish culture. The recent beheading of John the Baptist for opposing Herod Antipas’ divorce (Matt 14:3-13) made it a “politically sensitive issue.” Would Jesus, a “second John,” affirm John’s hard line?<sup>65</sup>

David Turner explains the Pharisees’ adversarial question (Matt 19:7) as they pitted a Hillel-style view of Deuteronomy 24:1 (liberal, divorce for any reason) against Genesis 1-2. They seemingly thought that Deuteronomy 24:1 commands divorce, but in quoting Genesis 1-2 Jesus places the creation account in Genesis “over the *ad hoc* legislation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. God’s original purpose for marriage overrides the Mosaic concession for human sin.”<sup>66</sup> While Moses allowed divorce, he did not command

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 716.

<sup>66</sup>David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 461.

it. Sexual immorality is the only ground for a divorce. Here Jesus' teaching parallels the strict teaching of Shammai, but the appeal to the creation account rather than to Deuteronomy 24 is not seen in Hillel or Shammai. The divine, original plan for marriage (Gen 1-2) trumps the later, human expedient of divorce. While the rabbis taught that unfaithful wives must be divorced by their husbands, "divorce is not a matter of course in the Bible (Lev 21:7; Ezek 44:22; Mal 2:16)."<sup>67</sup>

R. T. France is helpful again as he notes that the Deuteronomy passage answers human failure and endeavors to order an already messy situation caused by hard hearts toward God.<sup>68</sup> That divorce was indulged in—a mutinous assault against the Lord's clear intention for marriage—made the Mosaic provision necessary and appropriate. But none of this should have been so. The fact that divorce legislation exists in the Bible is a token of God's condescension; it does not infer God's sanction, but rather man's sinfulness.<sup>69</sup>

D. A. Carson explains that Jesus delayed answering their question (until Matt 19:9) because He knew their question was lacking. Their question was in effect, "What will God let us get away with in the matter of divorce and remarriage?" when it should have been, "What does God desire for His creatures in this matter?" Thus Jesus delayed a direct answer and focused on first principles. Jesus indicated the Creator's purpose in creating the sexes: He made them "male and female" (Gen 1:27) and said, "For this reason a man will leave (καταλείψει) his father and mother and be united (κολληθήσεται) to his wife" (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:5).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 719.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 720.

<sup>70</sup>Donald A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 2 of *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, abridged ed., ed. Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 117.

Leon Morris interprets the verb as enjoining “strong and decisive action”—“leave” can carry the meaning of “abandon,” something not to be done in a half-hearted manner. Marriage brought the man into a new, intimate relationship that was more important than any other. In that culture, leaving his parents was unnatural; family bonds were the most important bonds of all. The husband and wife belong together, bound together in the closest way.<sup>71</sup> Living *under* the creation ordinance means putting one’s marriage *over* all other relations.

Morris continues by quoting Jesus’ reference to Genesis 2:24: “The two will become one flesh” (ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν). This refers to the sexual act which unites husband and wife in the most intimate manner. Paul objected to activity with a harlot because it involved becoming “one flesh” with her (1 Cor 6:16), and such a privileged relationship was intended by God for husband and wife only. Thus Jesus cited Scripture to illustrate “the truth that marriage is more than a casual arrangement for the convenience of the two parties. It is the closest of earthly unities, and must be understood so.”<sup>72</sup> In 19:6 that closeness is underscored. “So then” the couple is “no longer” (οὐκέτι) what they had been, namely, two separated, isolated individuals. They are now “one flesh”—now bound together in the most companionable way possible. Hillel, Shammai, and their followers had lost sight of the fact that marriage was not casual, not subject to the husband’s whims but rather the closest, most binding covenant, to be treated with due reverence. Jesus then infers that because marriage is all of this, and because God created marriage this way, what God joins, no one should separate.<sup>73</sup> The trap set by His opponents did not catch Jesus. He did not antagonize one position by siding with another;

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<sup>71</sup>Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1992), 481.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 481-82.

He wisely sided with none of the disputants. Instead He rejected all of them and called His hearers to take God's Word seriously. If they did, they would see that marriage is more binding than they thought. Their attitude was typical; it had descended to a view that made the deep union of marriage casual and easily dissolvable when the male had the urge to leave.<sup>74</sup>

As Morris says, this was not the answer that Jesus' inquisitors were looking for in 19:3, so they asked another question in 19:7. They had a sneaking suspicion that Jesus was prohibiting all divorce, which was acceptable to none of them. Their question reminded Jesus that divorce was Moses' idea: "Why then did Moses command (ἐνετείλατο, 19:7) to give a certificate of divorce and send her away?"<sup>75</sup> Yet Moses did not command divorce. Rather, Moses pointed out the custom and wrote to regulate it. The Pharisees assumed that divorce was part of God's will and plan when He instituted marriage. Jesus denied this. The "certificate of divorce" (βιβλίον ἀποστασίου, 19:7) was the Jews' legal form. It had to contain a provision allowing the woman to marry again, it had to be properly prepared, witnessed, and served in "due legal manner." Nothing else was required. The Pharisees understood the legal process perfectly, but did not understand why divorce should not happen.<sup>76</sup>

In 19:8 Jesus immediately sets out to correct them. Moses merely allowed divorce, He did not command it. And he allowed it, Jesus told the Pharisees, due to "your" hard hearts (σκληροκαρδίαν, 19:8).<sup>77</sup> Divorce in Moses' day certainly needed to be regulated. Prior to Moses' writing Deuteronomy 24:1-4, women were in danger. Without the certificate of divorce that Moses legislated, a man could reject his wife, put her out,

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

and then if she tried to marry another man he could claim she was still married to him. She had no protection or legal recourse. When Moses considered such injustices toward women and provided for divorce, he was giving the rejected wives protection. Until she had the certificate of divorce in hand she was still his wife. When she received the certificate, she was no longer his wife and he had no claim to her. Hers would be a difficult way going forward, but she was at least free from her former husband's abuses. Permission for divorce was not part of God's original blueprint for marriage. Again, it was a concession made due to hard human hearts. "From the beginning" (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, 19:8) marriage was holy, and no one should ever enter it with the plan that if hard times came, there was easy, accessible provision for divorce. Moses' legislation (in Deut 24:1-4, misunderstood and misrepresented by the Pharisees in Matt 19:7) "was simply a desperate provision where hearts were hard, not a regular part of the matrimonial scene."<sup>78</sup>

It is clear, writes D. A. Carson, that divorce is both unnatural and a massive rebellion against God. Jesus had not directly answered the Pharisees question ("Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"), but He dismantled the attitudes behind that question and showed divorce to be what it is—ugly, sinful, and rebellious. Even if the exceptions that Scripture grants do permit a divorce, still a divorce cannot occur without sin, without descending into something that God hates.<sup>79</sup>

Carson expounds that the Pharisees hurried on to what they thought was the "fatal weakness" in Jesus' interpretation. If God hates divorce, then why did Moses "command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away" (Matt 19:7; Deut 24:1)? Jesus, in effect, told His opponents that they misunderstood their own

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 483.

<sup>79</sup>Carson, *Matthew*, 117.

proof text.<sup>80</sup> As stated, Moses did not mandate that people file for divorce, but rather He regulated the divorces that were occurring by insisting on an official certificate of divorce and by not allowing a woman who was divorced, remarried, then widowed or divorced again to return to the first husband (Deut 24:1-4). So, Moses did not command divorce. The most he did was permit it, and permission was granted because human hearts can be so hard and sinful that “divorce becomes necessary.”<sup>81</sup>

France asserts that Jesus’ opponents were tampering with the same scriptures they claimed to so highly revere. In Matthew 19:7 the Pharisees inserted a commandment that was not really there. The giving of the divorce certificate and the divorce itself are not commanded, but are presupposed as having already happened.<sup>82</sup> “But their assumption that this presupposition implies the acceptance of the original divorce is a reasonable one with which all current Jewish interpretation would have agreed; if it is not strictly a ‘commandment,’ it surely at least implies permission.”<sup>83</sup> The wording in Matthew is careful to preserve this distinction as Jesus uses the verb “permit” in responding to His opponents’ verb “command.” In Mark 10:3-4 the verbs are switched: Jesus asks what “command” Moses gave and the Pharisees reply that Moses “permitted” divorce, with Jesus going on to refer to the Deuteronomy text as a “commandment.” Matthew’s version casts the Pharisees “more clearly in the wrong.”<sup>84</sup> It also has Jesus holding back from the Deuteronomy text the rank of a commandment, which would put it on more equal footing with the Genesis premise. If it is only a “permission,” then it can

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 118.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 718-19.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 719.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

more properly be set aside.<sup>85</sup>

Jesus then added, “But it was not this way from the beginning” (Matt 19:8). Carson says Jesus was making the point that any discussion of divorce that merely argues what can or cannot be done will likely overlook this fact: divorce, even when permitted, is never a good, God-ordained option, but rather a “devastating sign of sin.”<sup>86</sup>

### **Divorce and Remarriage Is Adultery, with One Exception (19:9)**

Jesus then gave His own ruling: “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery” (19:9). Carson notes that “marital unfaithfulness” is a broader category than adultery, and “includes homosexuality and all other sexual indecency.”<sup>87</sup> A paraphrase of Jesus’ teaching might be, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery—though his principle does not hold in the case of marital unfaithfulness.”<sup>88</sup> Jesus’ ruling here is at the same time lighter and heavier than the Old Testament law. It was lighter because the death penalty was not applied to adultery in Jesus’ teaching as it was in the OT. It is heavier because the *only* exception that Jesus allows for divorce is sexual sin.<sup>89</sup>

Craig Blomberg concedes that Matthew 19:9 is a difficult passage and questions abound: Why is “except for marital unfaithfulness” not found in the parallel passage in Mark 10:11-12? Is Mark’s version “more original,” stating absolutely a prohibition which Matthew 19:9 tones down? Should Matthew’s apparent exception

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Carson, *Matthew*, 118.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 119.

clause be interpreted as not an exception after all? Could Matthew be writing only about annulment or separation, but not divorce?<sup>90</sup> (The Shammai-Hillel debate makes this final option very unlikely.) Despite the difficulties, 19:9 contains a legitimate exception.<sup>91</sup>

Blomberg also believes it is likely that Mark takes the exception for granted, given that in Jewish and Greco-Roman societies divorce and remarriage were always allowed, and at times mandatory after adultery. For his part, Matthew simply explains Jesus' words more thoroughly for his Jewish-Christian readers.<sup>92</sup>

As noted, marital unfaithfulness (*πορνεία*) has been translated variously, but should be taken to mean adultery or other sexual sins, such as “incest, homosexuality, prostitution, molestation, or indecent exposure.”<sup>93</sup> Blomberg notes also that Matthew 19:9 is unique in combining adultery (the “exception,” see above) with permission for the “innocent” person to divorce and remarry. At the same time he notes some scholars deny that the exception clause modifies both “divorces” and “marries another,” and teach that even when divorce is allowed, remarriage is never permitted.<sup>94</sup> Some, likewise, are influenced by the early church fathers' rejection of all remarriage. However, there were early dissenters to the no-remarriage view. It is significant that the no-remarriage view was often influenced by a “growing, unbiblical asceticism, especially in sexual matters” which permeated the Greek and Roman church.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 291.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 291-92. See also Bruce Vawter, “Divorce and the New Testament,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 39 (1977): 528-42. Vawter abandons his earlier view that Matt 19:9 is not an exception.

<sup>92</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 292.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.* According to Blomberg's footnote on page 292, the “some scholars” that he refers to are William Heth and Gordon Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 113-20. It should be noted that Heth has since reversed his position and no longer holds the “no remarriage” view.

<sup>95</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 292. See also P. Harrell, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Early Church*

Blomberg laments that the church is divided in key areas, not only as to the proper interpretation of Matthew 19:3-12, but also as to its application. If Jesus allowed divorce and remarriage for marital unfaithfulness, are there other situations in which divorce and remarriage are permissible? First Corinthians 7:15 indicates one, when an unbelieving spouse leaves a believing spouse. “But how could Paul, even under the inspiration of the Spirit, add a second exception to Jesus’ ‘no divorce’ policy if he recognized Jesus’ words as comprehensively addressing all possible situations?”<sup>96</sup> Jesus’ words may have been (in some sense) occasional, addressing that situation, but not every possible situation. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians “is an equally ‘occasional’ document.”<sup>97</sup> Gordon Fee writes that in 1 Corinthians 7 Paul may have been addressing Christians who were overly enamored with celibacy,<sup>98</sup> so could additional, legitimate grounds for divorce exist? Many who answer the question affirmatively do not provide “clear-cut criteria” and might seem to endorse “divorce on demand.”<sup>99</sup> Those who answer the question negatively “continue to treat fellow believers divorced on other grounds as second-class citizens of the kingdom no matter how genuine their repentance.”<sup>100</sup>

A good approach is to ask what the exceptions of Jesus and Paul have in common. Both shatter the “leaving and cleaving” and the “one flesh” unity—the two foundational components of marriage. Both leave the spurned party without any other options, if attempts to reconcile are rebuffed. Additionally, “both recognize the extreme

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(Austin: Sweet, 1967).

<sup>96</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 292.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 267.

<sup>99</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 293.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

seriousness of divorce as a last resort and as an admission of defeat.”<sup>101</sup> Thus the door is open for divorce as a final step. Possibly the lesser of two evils, when all attempts at reconciliation have failed, this process might be similar to excommunication for unrepentant sinners. Opening this door means that some will abuse their freedom and walk through it too soon. Further, too much attention to the exception clause of Matthew 19:9 may cause one to miss the overall theme that divorce is never desirable. Husbands and wives must always be working together to improve their relationship, rather than looking for ways to get out of their marriage vows.<sup>102</sup> People who divorce and/or remarry on any grounds must admit and confess the failure, repent of sins committed, and vow to be faithful in any future relationships. C. D. Osburn writes, “A new marriage is not continuous adultery.”<sup>103</sup> At most, the first sexual contact with a new partner violates the prior relationship, but it is more likely that Jesus is using “adultery” metaphorically, referring to the divorce itself.<sup>104</sup>

R. T. France notes that Jesus’ resulting announcement about divorce and remarriage in Matthew 19:9 is introduced by “I tell you (λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν),”<sup>105</sup> the same words by which Jesus introduced His authoritative restatements of God’s will in 5:21-47, including His parallel divorce and remarriage ruling in 5:32. Thus Jesus has challenged accepted conventions and demanded that people rethink marriage based not on convenience but on God’s purpose for His creation. The divine standard can be maintained even while allowing for sin and failure. Society cannot sidestep the tragic

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid. See also F. D. Bruner, *The Churchbook* (Waco: Word, 1990), 681-87. These pages contain practical applications for people in different marital statuses.

<sup>103</sup>C. D. Osburn, “The Present Indicative of Matthew 19:9,” *RestQ* 24 (1981): 193-203.

<sup>104</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 293.

<sup>105</sup>France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 720.

realities that occasioned the concessive legislation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, and will have to make provisions for failure. However, if the provisions are to be true to Jesus and to God's purpose for marriage, that same society must not let failure become normative. Divorce and remarriage must be legislated in every society, but they can have no ethical status higher than as the lesser evil.<sup>106</sup>

### **Eunuchs and the Kingdom of Heaven (19:10-12)**

D. A. Carson points out that the disciples find Jesus' teaching quite severe, to the point of suggesting that it would be better not to ever get married. Jesus indicated—only in Matthew's account—that not everyone can live with “continent celibacy.”<sup>107</sup> Some are born eunuchs, some are impotent, some have been made eunuchs, and some serve gladly as celibates for the sake of God's kingdom (Matt 19:12). Jesus taught that for those to whom “it has been given” (19:11), the disciples were right: “It is better not to marry” and “the one who can accept this [celibacy] should accept it” (19:11-12).<sup>108</sup>

Blomberg sees that Jesus' position is more strict than Shammai's, even with the exception clause, so the disciples wondered if keeping marriage obligations might be harder than staying single for life. Only in a limited way does Jesus agree.<sup>109</sup> God designs some people so that they do not need or want to marry, though not too many possess this gift. Yet one sees in Matthew 19 no technical terminology as to “gifts” or “calling” to singleness, but special empowerment may be implied. Marriage is clearly normative and God gifts just a few to be single. This queries the Roman Catholic view that power for

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 720-21.

<sup>107</sup>Carson, *Matthew*, 119.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 294.

celibacy is available to all for the asking and is mandatory for clergy.<sup>110</sup>

For what reasons do people become eunuchs? God creates some without “fully functioning sexual organs”<sup>111</sup> and men are sometimes castrated (in Bible times, for officials who managed a royal harem, such as the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:27). Others God empowers to stay celibate, though physiologically they could engage in sexual activity if they chose to do so. Eunuchs who have renounced marriage for the sake of God’s kingdom accept the celibate lifestyle voluntarily so that they can be more undistracted in devotion to God’s work (1 Cor 7:25-38). While Roman Catholics have “overly exalted celibacy,” many Protestants have “drastically undervalued it.”<sup>112</sup> Christian singles need more support from their churches and married friends; they must be valued as equally important members of Christ’s body. The church must also support and encourage those who sense God leading them to singleness, whether temporarily or for life, to be faithful to that leading and calling.<sup>113</sup>

France comments that one may take a cue from the disciples (19:10), who "comment rather humorously that in light of Jesus' radical challenge to conventional thinking about marriage it would be better not to marry at all than to be saddled with a marriage from which [one] cannot escape."<sup>114</sup> As for the disciples, this may be just an impulsive reaction and not a reasoned response, since in that Jewish culture permanent celibacy was not appreciated as a legitimate option. Marriage and fatherhood were seen as religious obligations. As satirical as the disciples’ comments may have been, Jesus

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<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 722.

gave them a serious response.<sup>115</sup>

Today, many couples get married for the wrong reasons (she is pretty, she can cook, he likes her family), then find themselves unhappy, and finally end the marriage for the wrong reasons (he is not happy, they have irreconcilable differences, she found someone else), violating the vows they made to God and each other. Ecclesiastes 5:5 warns that it is better not to vow than to vow and not fulfill the vow. Under these circumstances it certainly would have been better to remain single.

France then tackles a difficult saying of Jesus. Does Jesus' mention of "this word" in Matthew 19:11 refer to the disciples' comment in 19:10 (better to stay unmarried) or to His own rigorism in 19:9 (that divorce, then remarriage is adultery, with one exception)? The various options end with a very similar result: "Jesus will here be conceding that not everyone is able to maintain God's high standard for the permanence of marriage—in other words, that divorce (other than as a result of *porneia*) may in some cases be permissible after all."<sup>116</sup> "This word" probably does not refer to Jesus' own teaching in 19:9, but to the immediate antecedent, the disciples' comment in 19:10. If that is the case, Jesus takes their irony seriously: celibacy is a very real option, though not for everyone. The "gift" of celibacy implies that marriage is normative, but God gives some the capacity and will to depart from the norm.<sup>117</sup>

The "eunuchs" (εὐνοῦχοι, 19:12) language, says France, seems extreme and unhelpful in referring to people who could marry but choose not to do so. The fact that "eunuch" is repeated five times (in Greek: three nouns forms, two verb forms) in one verse makes it even more uneasy. In the first century Jewish environment, to suggest that some should be eunuchs was offensive: "Eunuchs were the object of pity if not of

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 723.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

horror.”<sup>118</sup> The metaphor collided with a culture in which marriage and the raising of children were so much expected as the norm that such a robust word was necessary to effectively dispute that supposition.<sup>119</sup>

France concludes that celibacy is a gift given individually; it is not for all. Some throughout church history have taught and believed that the celibate, monastic life is the best way to live. Those married with children are on a lower plane, not at the heights of spiritual attainment.<sup>120</sup> But Jesus’ words do not ratify that view. Marriage, as seen in Matthew 19:4-9, is God’s standard way, but it is not the only way to be loyal to the purpose of the Creator. God’s people differ; they are not all called to the same route of obedience.<sup>121</sup>

In Matthew 19:3-12 Blomberg finds three clues that “warn us against the notion that Jesus was comprehensively addressing all relevant questions about marriage and divorce.”<sup>122</sup> First, the particular historical background that informed the debate; second, the particular way that the question is worded; and third, the dishonest motives of the Pharisees. These clues indicate that this teaching had an occasional element and did not necessarily address every possible marital situation.<sup>123</sup>

France argues that Jesus’ teaching was, in the minds of the disciples, probably “an impossibly idealistic ethic.”<sup>124</sup> The gap was huge between the disciples’ “conventional ethical realism and the disturbingly new and demanding teaching of

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<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 724.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 726.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>Blomberg, *Matthew*, 290.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 289-90.

<sup>124</sup>France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 713.

Jesus.”<sup>125</sup> This sets up the process of re-training concerning the cataclysmic values of the kingdom of heaven seen running through the narrative. The particular mention of the “kingdom of heaven” motivates the uncommon ethic of Jesus in 19:12, and draws the contrast between divine versus human thoughts (16:23).<sup>126</sup>

### **Paul’s Perspective on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (1 Cor 7:1-40)**

First Corinthians 7:1-40 is arguably the key passage in discussing marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Of the five passages under consideration, this one arrives latest on the scene of redemptive history. Written under the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, it is in accord with all that has been said previously in the Scriptures regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Here Paul perfectly interprets—directly or indirectly—Moses, Malachi, the Evangelists, and Jesus. Three categories of single people (virgins, widows, and those divorced) are addressed in the eight basic sections of 1 Corinthians 7.<sup>127</sup>

#### **No Abstinence within Marriage (7:1-7)**

Following Gordon Fee, in verses 3 and 4, two things are emphasized. First, within marriage sexual relations are “due” (v. 3), and second, they are due because one’s body is not his or her “free possession,” but belongs to the spouse (v. 4). Literally, verse 3 reads, “the payment of what is due.”<sup>128</sup> In the Greek it is τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω, a phrase used of the payment of debts in the papyri. It is “the language of obligation”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

<sup>127</sup>Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 267-357. The eight sections that Fee proffers in his commentary serve as the headings for this section on 1 Cor 7.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 279.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

and implies that in terms of sexual fulfillment, married couples are in debt to each other. Some find this language offensive, but it was a necessary admonition given that couples were in fact depriving one another of sexual relations. It is to be granted that sexual giving to one's spouse is not a duty first and foremost, but the duty aspect at times must be heard for the sake of the marriage.<sup>130</sup> And sexual relations are not just “due,” but they are due “because through the unique giving of oneself in Christian marriage one comes under the 'authority' (ἐξουσιάζει) of the other.”<sup>131</sup>

In verse 5 Blomberg reminds the readers that Paul tolerates only one debarment: “The only exception Paul will tolerate is if both partners agree that for a very limited time they will abstain from sex for the sake of some unusually concentrated period of communion with the Lord.”<sup>132</sup> If they abstain longer, their lack of self-control (ἀκρασίαν) can be used by Satan to tempt them to sin. However, according to the lexical work of Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida, 7:6 indicates that this abstaining is a “concession” (συγγνώμην, a permission or allowance), not a “command” (ἐπιταγήν, specifically ordered).<sup>133</sup> While Paul wishes (θέλω) in 7:7 that all could be single, he realizes is not possible because not all have that “gift” (χάρισμα). Thus, according to George Montague, in 7:1-7 there is “a clear mutuality;”<sup>134</sup> the husband is not his wife's lord but is her equal as they mutually belong to one another. Paul follows Jesus in teaching “a new,

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<sup>130</sup>Ibid.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 280.

<sup>132</sup>Craig L. Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 133.

<sup>133</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), s.vv. “concession” and “command.”

<sup>134</sup>George Montague, *First Corinthians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 115.

countercultural, and revolutionary equality between husband and wife.”<sup>135</sup>

### **Singleness or Marriage for the Unmarried and Widowed (7:8-9)**

Following Gordon Fee, in 7:8 and continuing through the end of 1 Corinthians 7, Paul begins to address not only married people but different categories of single people: unmarried (ἄγαμος), widows (χήρα), and virgins (παρθένος). It is clear who the widows and virgins are, but what persons are indicated by “unmarried” (v. 8)? It may indicate widowers.<sup>136</sup> NT Greek had a word for widows, but since it did not have a word for widowers, ἀγάμοις may have served in its place. Further, if ἀγάμοις referred to all unmarried people, then why list widows next? One might note too that ἄγαμος appears again in 7:11 (indicating a woman separated from her spouse) and in 7:34 (contrasted with the never-married virgin). Thus the word indicates not “unmarried” people generally, but the “demarried,” who were formerly married, but are single now through death or divorce. In 7:7 Paul wished for singleness for all, and in 7:8 he says being single (“unmarried, as I”) would be “good” (καλὸν). However, in 7:9 he concedes not all can control themselves, and so should marry.<sup>137</sup>

### **No Divorce for Christian Partners (7:10-11)**

Married (γεγαμηκόσιν) believers are given a command (παραγγέλλω) from Paul which he indicates is not his, but the Lord’s command. Jesus spoke to this situation, so Paul appeals to His authority.<sup>138</sup> Wives are addressed first: “A wife must not separate (χωρισθῆναι) from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be

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<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 287.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 288.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 291.

reconciled to her husband” (vv. 10-11a).<sup>139</sup> “No divorce” is commanded for believers, but Paul allows an exception (“but if she does”), as he does in every other situation in 1 Corinthians 7. Initiation of divorce by the woman was normally not allowed by the Jews. It is thus noteworthy that Paul spoke first to her, and primarily to her, with the words to the husband not to divorce (ἀφιέναι) in verse 11b almost an afterthought.<sup>140</sup>

Montague believes this may have been because the question posed came from a specific case in which a woman in Corinth was pursuing a divorce. If Paul had been writing to Jews, the issue would not have been addressed since only men could proceed with divorce.<sup>141</sup>

John Murray's summary of 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 may be paraphrased thus: The Lord (and Paul) command no divorce; if there is divorce the options are singleness or reconciliation. If the divorce has happened, specific provisions must be followed. Let the breach be remedied, but if not, do not marry another. The words of 7:11 regulate the wrong after it has happened, but they do not in any way condone the divorce.<sup>142</sup>

### **No Divorce for Mixed Marriages (7:12-16)**

Gordon Fee leads the way through verses 12-16. Here one spouse is Christian and the other is not. Paul let his readers know that it is “I, not the Lord” who gives the teaching. This is not to say that Paul’s words were not inspired but just that this is an area which Jesus did not address (see v. 10). As in 7:10-11, the couple is to “stay as they are.”<sup>143</sup> The believer cannot pursue divorce (7:12-13). The Christians wanted to divorce

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<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 293.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., 294.

<sup>141</sup>Montague, *First Corinthians*, 117.

<sup>142</sup>John Murray, *Divorce* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), 62.

<sup>143</sup>Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 297.

their unbelieving spouses because they thought a pagan spouse contaminated the marriage. Paul argues to the contrary: mixed marriages are essentially Christian;<sup>144</sup> the believer is not *defiled* but rather the unbeliever is *sanctified* (but not saved nor made holy). So while the believer cannot prevent the unbeliever from leaving, when upheld, such a marriage furnishes the space for the unbelieving spouse to be saved (7:16)<sup>145</sup>. But once again, there is an exception (just as in vv. 5, 9, 11a, 21, 28, 36, and 39). If the unbeliever leaves (*χωρίζεται*, present, middle, indicative, third person, singular) the remaining spouse must let him (or her) do so (*χωρίζέσθω*, present, passive, imperative, third person, singular; a permissive imperative). The believer is not bound (7:15). The exception, as in the case of each exception in 1 Corinthians 7, “is real but not ideal; it is allowed but is not to be pursued.”<sup>146</sup>

The departure of the unbeliever (7:15), according to Montague, has a wider meaning than divorce. It may also apply to an unbeliever making the marriage intolerable for the follower of Christ. This view is supported by noting that the word for “bound” (*δεδούλωται*) is not the word for something legally binding, but indicates the bondage of a slave.<sup>147</sup> There is also disagreement as to whether this means “not bound” (7:15) to preserve the marriage, or not bound in the sense of being able to remarry. Hans Conzelmann argues that “Once again the ‘law of freedom’ prevails: the Christian is not subjected to any constraint because of the pagan’s behavior. He can marry again.”<sup>148</sup>

Fee indicates that the *not bound* wording “is the source of the notorious

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<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 298.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>Montague, *First Corinthians*, 122.

<sup>148</sup>Hans Conzelmann, *I Corinthians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 123.

‘Pauline privilege,’<sup>149</sup> which understands Paul to mean that the believer is free to marry another. While this view has traditionally had many adherents, several data question this conclusion.<sup>150</sup> Seeing remarriage here misses the main point of the chapter, which has to do with *not* pursuing a change of status. Yet, while the exceptions do not allow a change of partners (in this view), they *do* allow a change of status. That said, Fee acknowledges this does not mean that Paul disallows remarriage in these cases; he just does not address it here.<sup>151</sup> It might be a case of right conclusion, wrong text.

### **The Guiding Principle—Stay as One Was When Called (7:17-24)**

First Corinthians 7:17, 20, and 24 teach that each believer must live “in whatever situation” God gives them. Then it says again that everyone should stay “in the situation” that was current for them at the time of their salvation. A few verses later it is written for the third time that all must abide “in the situation” they were in when they were called to Christ. Craig Blomberg translates the word “live” in 7:17 as, “walk about” (περιπατείω). The three-fold repetition of “situation” in the preceding verses refers to marital, social, economic, and physical circumstances. Paul’s readers are to function obediently in that status “without immediately seeking to change it.”<sup>152</sup>

According to Gordon Fee, the Corinthians were admonished to remain in the social setting that was current for them at the time of their call and conversion to Christ. The reason: God’s call to be in Christ (1 Cor 1:9) “transcends such settings so as to make them essentially irrelevant.”<sup>153</sup> The call to Christ so changes one’s relationship with God

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<sup>149</sup>Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 302.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid., 303.

<sup>152</sup>Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 145.

<sup>153</sup>Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 307.

that a person need not seek to change their relationships with people. Human relationships are transformed and redefined by the divine relationship into which God calls His people. A person is not better off in one situation than in another. Paul illustrates this in a very relevant way for the culture of the first century, with the examples of circumcision and slavery.<sup>154</sup> The argument is easily traced and very basic: they were to live their lives, staying in the situation in which God called them. Unlike other places in 1 Corinthians 7, there are no exceptions here.<sup>155</sup>

Montague affirms that becoming a follower of Jesus does not entitle one, nor invite one, to move to a new social level. Paul strives to make sure the call to faith is not clouded by a compulsion to change one's marital or social status. Everyone is equal under a call that is common to everyone. Jews, once called to Christ and converted, must not try to "rewrite their history"<sup>156</sup> by somehow becoming uncircumcised. Neither should the newly called and converted, yet uncircumcised, Gentiles "try to become a more original Christian, as the Jewish Christians could claim to be" by undergoing circumcision (see Gal 5:2-6).<sup>157</sup>

### **Is Preferable but Not Required (7:25-28)**

In these verses the Corinthians argue, and Paul agrees, "It is good for the virgins [τῶν παρθένων] to remain as they are" (v. 25, 26). However, the reality is that marriage is not a sin (vv. 28, 36). Fee states that Paul wished to spare the people certain distress (θλιψιν) in the present life (σαρκι), and so counseled as he did.<sup>158</sup> Montague

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., 308.

<sup>156</sup>Montague, *First Corinthians*, 124.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid.

<sup>158</sup>Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 325.

addresses “the present distress” (7:26), which may be either the difficulties of life that come with marriage, or the end times crisis prior to the second coming (*parousia*) of Jesus.<sup>159</sup>

Blomberg disagrees with those who think the “distress” might have been a famine or persecution. Corinth in the mid-first century was second to none in terms of prosperity, and there are no indications that the Christians there were especially persecuted.<sup>160</sup>

Montague reminds that time has been compressed by Jesus’ resurrection on one side and by His second coming on the other. Life in the present thus acquires an urgency of which God’s people—all people—are often unaware. In such a context virginity is especially attractive “because the meaning of time has been changed now that the Lord is on its horizon.”<sup>161</sup>

### **Paul’s Reasons for Singleness (7:29-35)**

“What I mean, brothers and sisters” (7:29) opens this section. Paul endeavors to explain what he had just said through 7:28. Fee calls this section a digression for the purpose of explanation between Paul’s opening response (7:25-28) and his conclusion (7:36-38). Both of those passages that surround the digression say the same thing: it is good for “virgins” to remain in their present situation, but it would not be a sin if they were to marry.<sup>162</sup>

That “the time is short” (*καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος*, v. 29), taken as the final days, was also covered above in the discussion of “the present crisis” (v. 26). Like Montague’s

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<sup>159</sup>Montague, *First Corinthians*, 130.

<sup>160</sup>Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 151.

<sup>161</sup>Montague, *First Corinthians*, 130

<sup>162</sup>Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 335.

statements preceding and following this one, Blomberg declares that Christians must live out the urgency of serving the Lord. This urgency is fueled by the uncertainty of the time of Jesus' return, after which there will no longer remain the opportunity to win people to Christ, disciple them, and otherwise serve the Lord.<sup>163</sup> Montague writes,

Time itself has suffered a dramatic reduction by some external force . . . the resurrection of Jesus and the second coming, which it entails (Acts 17:31; 1 Thess 1:10). . . . These two great events have contracted time, like an accordion or a fluted curtain closed to its shortest, because we see both ends of time at once—and thus its ultimate meaning—in a way that the nonbelieving world does not.<sup>164</sup>

Five times in 7:29-31 one reads the words, “as (if) . . . not” (ὡς μὴ). Montague cautions that none of the earthly things mentioned should be allowed to become so absorbing—“engrossed in them at the expense of what is meant to last”<sup>165</sup>—that they drown our devotion to the Lord. It seems that whatever one has (wife, happiness, etc.), he is to live *as if he did not* possess it. In other words, he must be willing to have those things taken from him, not holding to them too tightly, and letting them pass away from him, even as “this world in its present form is passing away” (7:31).<sup>166</sup>

Blomberg states that even if Jesus does not return immediately, serving one's spouse and children means there will be less time available to minister to the church and the world (vv. 32-34). Yet Paul refuses to make his preferences into absolutes, nor will he sanction without qualification the ways of the pro-celibacy group.<sup>167</sup> Verse 35 contains the greatest clue in 1 Corinthians 7 for determining when marriage is appropriate or not.

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<sup>163</sup>Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 152.

<sup>164</sup>Montague, *First Corinthians*, 131.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., 131-32.

<sup>167</sup>Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 152.

Whichever status enables a person to “live in a right way in undivided devotion (ἀπερισπάστως) to the Lord” (7:35) is best.<sup>168</sup>

### **But Marriage Is No Sin (7:36-40)**

Gordon Fee notes that these last five verses bring the whole argument, starting in 7:1, to a conclusion. This section also flows directly from 7:35, specifically concluding the argument of 7:25ff. It is not a specific case (the traditional but fading view that a father is trying to decide whether to give his daughter away in marriage) tacked on at the end.<sup>169</sup> In 7:36 Paul reiterates what he said twice in 7:28, that the man or the virgin who wants to get married, and does, has not sinned. If the several conditions of 7:36 prevail, then the couple should marry. And if the several conditions of 7:37 prevail, then the couple should not marry. Both do well, but those not marrying do better.<sup>170</sup>

The last paragraph (7:39-40) is puzzling. Fee wonders at its presence as the final word. First, keeping with the pattern earlier in the chapter, this paragraph relates to 7: 36-38, which was addressed to men. Verses 39-40 are then the balancing address to women. And second, this paragraph is not for virgins only—though it includes them—but is the last word to women going back to 7:1.<sup>171</sup> Thus the concerns of both sections are repeated in the conclusion: on the one hand, a woman is not to divorce her husband (7:1-24), and on the other hand, if he dies, then the same two options in 7:36-38 are there for her. Singleness is preferable, but marriage to a believer is a possibility, and even as a matter of fact, a live option also.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

<sup>169</sup>Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 350.

<sup>170</sup>Ibid.

<sup>171</sup>Ibid.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid.

Craig Blomberg concludes this portion of 1 Corinthians 7 with a lament, a plea, and examples both positive and negative. He notes that few western Christians seriously consider remaining unmarried for the sake of undivided devotion to the Lord and His work. It would be good if more did so.<sup>173</sup>

On the positive side, the worldwide ministry of the Anglican pastor John R. W. Stott was helped along by his singleness. The same is true of the Southern Baptist missionary, Lottie Moon. Both display evidence of how much can be done when no family concerns demand attention.<sup>174</sup>

As for negative examples of family life, John Wesley (and many pastor-workaholics today) might have been better off to stay single than to watch as their marriages fell apart due to chronic neglect. William Carey's missionary career is tarnished by the demands he put on his wife, who went insane. Many of these cases might have been avoided if couples had not married at all.<sup>175</sup>

The realities of the unknown time of the return of Jesus and the prospect of sudden death should give God's people urgency about the work of God's kingdom. Complacency sets in when each one assumes that he or she has many more years left on earth, and can serve God in a leisurely and lazy way, at one's own pleasure.<sup>176</sup>

### **Conclusion**

It is not possible, given the purpose and prescribed length of this chapter, to address every Scripture that bears on the topic of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The five passages studied here in chapter 2—Genesis 2:18-25, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Malachi 2:10-16, Matthew 19:3-12, and 1 Corinthians 7:1-40—reveal the mind and plan of the

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<sup>173</sup>Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 156.

<sup>174</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup>*Ibid.*

Lord God on this topic through salvation history. The panorama of writers (the Lord writing through Moses, Malachi, Matthew, and Paul) and genres (creation ordinance, law, disputation oracle, gospel, and epistle) together create an inspired, interesting, diverse, life-giving testimony.

Other passages, which were not among the five passages addressed in this chapter, also bear important witness to the topic of the making and breaking of marriage and family life; they will benefit those who study, meditate on, and apply them. Those passages are found in the Old Testament books of Leviticus, Numbers, Ezra, Nehemiah, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea. Looking to the New Testament will, of course, prove fruitful also in this endeavor. One would do well to focus especially on the gospel accounts in Matthew 5:31-32, Mark 10:1-12, and Luke 16:18, and then to study the family living passages in the epistles—Ephesians 5:21-33, Colossians 3:18-4:1, Titus 2:1-5, and 1 Peter 3:1-7<sup>177</sup>.

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<sup>177</sup>Eph 5:21-33 and 1 Pet 3:1-7 were preached as part of this project, though they were not addressed in this chapter. Extended sermon outlines for these passages can be found in appendix 15.

CHAPTER 3  
THEORETICAL, LEGAL-HISTORICAL, CULTURAL,  
AND SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF MARRIAGE,  
DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

**Introduction**

The thesis of this chapter is that theoretical, legal-historical, cultural, and sociological considerations must inform the understanding of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. With these considerations firmly in mind, and especially with the biblical and theological perspectives on marriage, divorce, and remarriage (chap. 2), the readers and the project participants will have a comprehensive perspective from which to live and teach others (2 Tim 2:2).

**American Law and History Related to Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage**

Divorce came bursting on the scene of the New World in 1639. The first divorce was recorded by the Puritans in Massachusetts when Mrs. James Luxford discovered that her husband was married to another woman. Mrs. Luxford was allotted all of the couple's property when her husband was charged with bigamy, fined, and banished to England.<sup>1</sup> However, another divorce is said to predate the Luxford's:

In the first record of a legal divorce in the American colonies (January 5, 1643), Anne Clarke of the Massachusetts Bay Colony is granted a divorce from her absent and adulterous husband, Denis Clarke, by the Quarter Court of Boston, Massachusetts. In a signed and sealed affidavit presented to John Winthrop Jr., the son of the colony's founder, Denis Clarke, admitted to abandoning his wife with whom he had two children for another woman with whom he had another two children. He also stated his refusal to return to his original wife, thus giving the Puritan court no option but to punish Clarke and grant a divorce to his wife, Anne.

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<sup>1</sup>C. Herold, "History of Divorce in America," accessed April 19, 2014, <https://suite.io/cathy-herold/530x2jm>.

The Quarter Court’s final decision read: “Anne Clarke, beeing deserted by Denis Clarke, hir husband, and hee refusing to accompany with hir, she is graunted to bee divorced.”<sup>2</sup>

The history of divorce in America reverberates with societal changes in attitudes toward morals, economics, and gender roles—factors that tax marriages. In colonial times, desertion or bilateral dissolution were popular ways to end a marriage. In the case of desertion, “Wanted” ads for delinquent husbands or wives were frequently posted.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the history of divorce in America, the same concerns frequently appear—sufficient and tolerable grounds for divorce, disposal of assets and liabilities, alimony, and custody of children. Dealing with divorce as a society, women’s groups, the legal profession, legislators, and religious organizations all had various roles and input in the process.<sup>4</sup>

Early in American history, legislative and judicial authorities began to regulate marriage and divorce. In 1629, the colony of Massachusetts Bay created a judicial council for divorce, declaring divorces legal on grounds of adultery (the primary confirmation of divorce legitimacy, complete with proof of guilt or innocence), bigamy, desertion, and impotence. Geographically, northern colonies advanced laws for handling divorces, the middle colonies constructed fixed provisions, and southern colonies concentrated on attempts to preclude divorce exempting cases of proved or admitted adultery.<sup>5</sup>

The colonial years in America also concede divorces that were prompted by

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<sup>2</sup>History.com, “This Day in History: January 5, 1673, First Divorce in the Colonies,” accessed April 19, 2014, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/first-divorce-in-the-colonies>.

<sup>3</sup>Margorie Engel, *Divorce Help Sourcebook* (Canton, MI: Visible Ink, 1994), excerpted in “The History of Divorce: How It Continues to Affect You,” accessed April 22, 2014, <http://www.lifemanagement.com/fsa8.2.1137>.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

interracial adultery. In the 1770s, Thomas Paine, editor of the *Philadelphia Magazine*, was separated from his English wife and contended strenuously and vociferously for divorce reform. Divorces became more routine and were considered less disgraceful. Even as feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton crusaded for the right to divorce, worries about escalating divorce rates led to the formation of the New England Divorce Reform League.<sup>6</sup>

After the Civil War, Americans centered their attention on the divorce issue as the rate of divorce was increasing about five times faster than the growth rate of the population. Society was not wired to rebuild marriage and the family, while at the same time revamping economic and political systems. Statisticians indicate that a spike in the nation's divorce rate after wars is an expected circumstance, possibly caused by war-hastened marriages and long periods of estrangement.<sup>7</sup>

By 1877, the rate per 1,000 of qualified people who never married reached its high point. Those who married took on many of the distinctives associated with today's American family: families became smaller, parents became more emotionally engrossed in child rearing, and spouses were expected to work together as partners. During the 1880s, society gave women the solitary obligation of ensuring cleanliness, godliness, and decorum in the household. Nathaniel Hawthorne depicted women as the emblems of the earth who were to supervise men's morals.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1885 and 1906, states across the country dabbled in prohibitive marriage and divorce statutes. Still, the divorce rate expanded as both genders found it inconvenient to live according to the exacting roles and community codes of conduct that defined right practices. History witnesses that there was no hesitancy in discouraging and

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<sup>6</sup>Herold, "History of Divorce in America."

<sup>7</sup>Engel, *Divorce Help Sourcebook*.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

deliberating on a couple's sexual relations, and even hygiene habits, in divorce court. As the country expanded, divorce courts filled up and divorce became both a coast-to-coast spectacle and sensation.<sup>9</sup>

Americans have always been of the roving, wandering sort, but moving to follow the American dream of better careers and futures often created marital headaches. Settlers found that western states had indulgent, painless divorce statutes. Thus the pioneer movement created the “migratory divorce problem”<sup>10</sup> for the established eastern states. Separated spouses were able to ferret out and scout for divorce in states with laws more flexible than those of their own state. For those able to afford to make the journey, hasty divorces were available along the westward way. This was facilitated by the fact that residency requirements in western states were measured in months not years, and grounds for divorce were lax.<sup>11</sup>

The initial “divorce mill” states were Indiana, Utah, and the Dakotas. Towns gratified divorce-seekers by advancing public transportation, nice hotels, good meals, and agreeable lawyers and courts. Divorce was a lucrative business, one not bothered by concerns about national reproach.<sup>12</sup>

Entering the 1900s, Protestant denominations worked together to limit divorce. They sponsored the Inter-Church Conference on Marriage and Divorce in 1903 that championed more prohibitive marriage and divorce rules. They also pushed for laws that did not differ from state to state, but instead were the same nationwide. Many churches prohibited remarriage, though this was not well-received by their members.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

The 1920s brought about a sexual revolution, foreshadowing the more highly publicized revolution forty years later, and the number of pregnant brides upsurged. An appetite for sexual fulfillment led young people to get married, but many of those marriages landed in divorce court. Thus divorce rates climbed. During the 1950s, family courts were being established, but by the end of that decade over 95 percent of divorces went unchallenged.<sup>14</sup>

In the late 1960s America saw the advent of “no-fault divorce” (divorce by mutual consent), which “provided a means of reconciling the law as it was practiced with the codes as they were written.”<sup>15</sup> California’s Commission on the Family recommended no-fault divorce in 1969 calling it “marital dissolution.”<sup>16</sup> Such a law was signed by Governor Ronald Reagan, later the first president to have been divorced. Iowa soon followed California’s lead and within 10 years almost all states provided for some version of no-fault divorce.<sup>17</sup>

Reagan later acknowledged that signing the nation’s first no-fault divorce bill was one on the biggest missteps of his political career. He had sought “to eliminate the strife and deception often associated with the legal regime of fault-based divorce”<sup>18</sup> as the new law was intended to suppress the need for spouses to concoct spousal wrongdoing in the quest for their divorce. “But no-fault divorce also gutted marriage of its legal power to bind husband and wife, allowing one spouse to dissolve a marriage for any reason—or

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Evolution of Divorce,” accessed April 23, 2014, <http://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/the-evolution-of-divorce>.

for no reason at all.”<sup>19</sup>In the next fifteen years almost every state enacted no-fault legislation and the divorce revolution storming the nation was in overdrive:

From 1960 to 1980, the divorce rate more than doubled—from 9.2 divorces per 1,000 married women to 22.6 divorces per 1,000 married women. This meant that while less than 20% of couples who married in 1950 ended up divorced, about 50% of couples who married in 1970 did. And approximately half of the children born to married parents in the 1970s saw their parents part, compared to only about 11% of those born in the 1950s. . . . The nearly universal introduction of no-fault divorce helped to open the floodgates, especially because these laws facilitated unilateral divorce and lent moral legitimacy to the dissolution of marriages. . . . (And now in “the morning after” . . . the myth of the good divorce has not stood up well in the face of sustained social scientific inquiry—especially when one considers the welfare of children exposed to their parents’ divorces. . . . Clearly, the divorce revolution of the 1960s and ‘70s left a poisonous legacy.<sup>20</sup>

As mentioned, it was hoped that no-fault divorce would eliminate adversarial divorces and the need for mutual-consent divorces to be disguised as fault divorces in court documents. It was also promoted as a way to discount the steep price tag of divorce; it did not, however, live up to this image. Without an avenue for expressing the outrage that often came in the process of traditional divorces, spouses tried to damage each other financially.<sup>21</sup>

No-fault also fathered a new breed of migratory divorce as couples hurried to states with shortened residency preconditions and the most benevolent property, alimony, and child custody bestowals. Lawyers, therapists, and financial advisors feathered their nests, watching as divorce rates increased and as couples made war—with children, alimony, and property as the spoils.<sup>22</sup>

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, methodized mediation in divorce resolutions became a favored way to address the emotional, financial, and legal issues

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Engel, *Divorce Help Sourcebook*.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

linked to divorce proceedings. Some courts required mediation, but it was a personal decision made and funded by the divorcing couple.<sup>23</sup>

### **Current Status of Divorce Laws in America**

Stefania Marcassa concurs that in the late 1960s, the US divorce laws underwent major alterations and the divorce rate more than doubled in all of the states. Between 1970 and 1980 the divorce rate dilated from 13 divorces per thousand of married females to 23 divorces. The new laws brought about unilateral divorce (as opposed to consensual divorce) in most states, along with alterations in divorce settlements—including property division, alimony transfers, and child custody assignments—in every state.<sup>24</sup> Marcassa continues,

Changes in divorce settlements provide economic incentives for both spouses to agree to divorce. . . . Under the new financial settlements, divorced men gain from a favorable division of property, while women gain from an increase in alimony and child support transfers. Since both of them are better off in the new divorce setting, the existing requirement of consent for divorce (consensual or unilateral) is no longer relevant. Results show that changes in divorce settlements account for a substantial amount of the increase in the aggregate divorce rate.<sup>25</sup>

A divorce formally dissolves a legal marriage. Spouses do not hold a constitutional or legal right to divorce, but states permit divorces because doing so best serves public policy. To increase the likelihood that a given divorce serves public policy interests, states may require a “cooling-off period,” which sets a time period after legal separation that spouses must yield to prior to continuing divorce actions.<sup>26</sup>

Currently the United States court system recognizes two types of divorces:

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Stefania Marcassa, “Divorce Laws and Divorce Rate in the U. S.,” Human Capital and Economic Opportunity: A Global Working Group, Working Paper No. 2011-009, accessed April 24, 2014, [http://humcap.uchicago.edu/RePEc/hka/wpaper/Marcassa\\_2011\\_divorce-law-rate.pdf](http://humcap.uchicago.edu/RePEc/hka/wpaper/Marcassa_2011_divorce-law-rate.pdf).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Cornell University Law School, Legal Information Institute, “Divorce and Separation: An Overview,” accessed April 24, 2014, <http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/divorce>.

absolute divorce, known as *divorce a vinculo matrimonii*, and limited divorce, known as *divorce a menso et thoro*.<sup>27</sup> To obtain an absolute divorce, courts require some type of deducible and corroborative showing of misbehavior or maltreatment on one spouse's part. An absolute divorce judicially terminates a legal marriage, and produces a change of both parties' statuses back to single. Limited divorces are typically referred to as separation decrees, and result in the ending of the right to cohabit, but the court does not officially dissolve the marriage and the parties' statuses remain unchanged. Some states permit conversion divorce. Conversion divorce changes a legal separation into a legal divorce after both spouses have been separated for a statutorily appointed period of time.<sup>28</sup>

As noted in the previous section, many states have passed no-fault divorce laws. These laws do not demand that spousal misconduct be evidenced and are a response to original divorce statutes that required proof of adultery or some other offensive act in a court of law by the divorcing party. However, even today, not all states have no-fault divorce statutes. Instead, the court must only find that the relationship is no longer capable of succeeding, that irreconcilable differences have caused an incurable fracture of the marriage, that dissonance of personalities has destroyed the justifiable ends of the marital relationship, preventing any rational likelihood of reconciliation, or that the marriage is irretrievably broken.<sup>29</sup>

Rounding out the discussion of the current status of divorce laws in America, the "Uniform Laws" should be mentioned.<sup>30</sup> They are simply listed below, along with the

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Cornell University Law School, Legal Information Institute, "What Are Uniform Laws?" accessed May 3, 2015, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uniform/uniform>. The article states, "As interstate business and individual movement have increased in the U.S. the felt need for greater uniformity of law on particular subjects has grown. One response to such a need is enactment of a federal law on the subject. . . ."

states that have adopted them: the Uniform Divorce Recognition Act (California, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Wisconsin); the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (all fifty states plus the District of Columbia); the Uniform Civil Liability for Support Act (Maine, New Hampshire, Utah); the Uniform Marital Property Act (Wisconsin); the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act (Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Washington); the Uniform Premarital Agreement Act (Arizona, Arkansas, California, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia); and the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (adopted Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, Texas, Washington).<sup>31</sup>

### **Sociological Considerations Related to Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage**

Divorce is a major life stressor that impacts the physical and emotional health of those involved. Poor communication is a hallmark of the (lack of) relationship between ex-spouses; a model for communication is commended. This section also address stepfamilies, specifically exploring the results of a questionnaire given to second wives. A study of teens in stepfamilies will then be considered, especially regarding the issue of coping with losses, which is seen to be *the* major issue among a vast array of others.

### **Divorce and Physical Health**

Studies by Segraves and Verbrugge show that divorced people suffer from more chronic and acute health issues than those who are single or married.<sup>32</sup> Women are

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Another approach known by the name ‘Uniform State Laws’ seeks adoption of identical or similar laws by all the states. It dates back to the late nineteenth century.” Examples of uniform laws from this web site include the Uniform Child Custody Act, Uniform Civil Liability for Support Act, Uniform Divorce Recognition Act, Uniform Interstate Family Support Act, Uniform Marital Property Act, Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act, and the Uniform Act on Paternity.

<sup>31</sup>Cornell University Law School, Legal Information Institute, “Divorce and Separation.”

<sup>32</sup>Lucinda Steenbergen Richmond and Donna Hendrickson Christensen, “Coping Strategies

especially hindered, though divorce compromises the physical health of both genders. Verbrugge shows that divorced and separated women report significantly more disability, major activity limitation, and acute sickness than married women. The same differences were not found to be true for men in the sample, suggesting that “marital dissolution has a more negative impact on the health of women than men.”<sup>33</sup> Another large study by Renne collected data from 4, 452 households, found that divorced men described their personal health as “fair” or “poor” less often than woman in the sample. Additionally, divorced women in the same study reported more chronic illness and disability than the divorced men surveyed.<sup>34</sup> Bloom, Asher, and White, reviewing “marital disruption as a stressor” studied 88,000 households, finding that divorced women reported 67 percent more acute problems than divorced men.<sup>35</sup>

### **Divorce and Psychological Health**

Paralleling studies of physical health, divorce has also been extensively studied in terms of psychological health consequences. In studies by Walters-Chapman, Price, and Serovich, depression has surfaced “as an important indicator of emotional distress or mental distress among divorced individuals.”<sup>36</sup> Menaghan and Lieberman found that

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and Post-Divorce Health Outcomes,” *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage* 34, nos. 1-2 (2000): 41-59. Richmond and Christensen cite the study of R. T. Segraves, “Divorce and Health Problems,” *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality* 19 (1985): 152-64. Also referenced is the study of L. M. Verbrugge, “Marital Status and Health,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 41 (1979): 267-85.

<sup>33</sup>Verbrugge, “Marital Status and Health,” 283.

<sup>34</sup>K. S. Renne, “Health and Marital Experience in an Urban Population,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 34 (1971): 338-50, cited in Richmond and Christensen, “Coping Strategies and Post-Divorce Health Outcomes,” 43.

<sup>35</sup>B. L. Bloom, S. J. Asher, and S. W. White, “Marital Disruption as a Stressor: A Review and Analysis,” *Psychological Bulletin* 85 (1978): 867-94. National Center for Health Statistics, “Differentials in Health Characteristics by Marital Status: United States, 1971-1972,” *Vital and Health Statistics*, series 10, no. 104 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

<sup>36</sup>S. F. Walters-Chapman, S. J. Price, and J. M. Serovich. “The Effects of Guilt on Divorce Adjustment,” *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage* 22 (1995): 163-77.

increased depression follows divorce as they tracked the relationship between psychological well-being and marital status.<sup>37</sup> Doherty, Su, and Needle found that compared to a married control group, divorced people “showed reduced levels of psychological functioning as measured by feelings of sadness or hopelessness, stress and strain, anxiety and depression, and satisfaction with one’s personal life.”<sup>38</sup> The literature shows that along with increased depression, divorced individuals experience a lesser degree of satisfaction in life than married individuals.<sup>39</sup>

As in the case of physical health findings, women evidently encounter more psychological stress after divorce than men. Riessman and Gerstel found that divorced or separated women had more symptoms of depression than men in the same situation.<sup>40</sup>

Doherty, Su, and Needle found “different patterns in psychological health for maritally disrupted versus continuously married men and women.”<sup>41</sup> This study demonstrated that the psychological health of “both divorced and separated women and men”<sup>42</sup> was much lower than for continuously married groups. Notwithstanding, women in the maritally disrupted group showed *declines* in mental well-being from the time before to after the separation, while maritally disrupted men showed *increases* in mental

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<sup>37</sup>E. G. Menaghan, and M. A. Lieberman, “Changes in Depression Following Divorce: A Panel Study,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 48 (1986): 319-28.

<sup>38</sup>W. J. Doherty, S. Su, and R. Needle, “Marital Disruption and Psychological Well-Being: A Panel Study,” *Journal of Family Issues* 10 (1989): 72-85, cited in Richmond and Christensen, “Coping Strategies and Post-Divorce Health Outcomes,” 44.

<sup>39</sup>F. Andrews, and S. Withey, *Social Indicators of Well-Being* (New York: Plenum, 1976); J. P. Robinson and P. R. Shaver, *Measures of Social Psychological Attitudes* (Ann Arbor, MI: Institute of Social Research, 1973); A. Zautra, E. Beier, and L. Cappel, “The Dimensions of Life Quality in a Community,” *American Journal of Community Psychology* 5 (1977): 85-97.

<sup>40</sup>C. K. Riessman, and N. Gerstel, “Marital Dissolution and Health: Do Males or Females Have Greater Risk?” *Social Science and Medicine* 20 (1985): 626-35, cited in Richmond and Christensen, “Coping Strategies and Post-Divorce Health Outcomes,” 44.

<sup>41</sup>Richmond and Christensen, “Coping Strategies and Post-Divorce Health Outcomes,” 44.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

well-being. Clearly, studies suggest that interplay between marital status and gender influences mental health.<sup>43</sup>

### **A Model for Post-Divorce Communication with a Former Spouse**

Communication between ex-spouses is in many ways easier than ever. Face-to-face communication may often be best, but the current age of smart phones, text messaging, e-mail, Facebook, and other media, as well as the postal service, make a lack of communication inexcusable. Healthy communication is vitally important in order for the relationship between ex-spouses to slowly ascend from the ashes and make the best of a bad situation. Poor (nasty, unkind, provocative, and mean-spirited) communication, or no communication, can lead passively to misunderstanding, and actively—in worst cases—to revenge, rage, and violence. Especially when children are involved (minors within the home and especially minors within earshot), excellent communication is a beautiful and necessary gift that every child would want and that every divorcing parent can afford to give their needy, frightened kids.

Raymond Taylor ponders whether there is a best way, or at least a good way, to foster civil communication between former spouses. For people going through a divorce involving minor children, court-related programs may help parents to communicate well.<sup>44</sup> The timing varies: some courts refer parents at the beginning of the divorce process and require documentation of the training before the divorce is final. Or the court may simply trust that parents will finish the training with no accountability after the divorce is granted. The literature is inconclusive as to the effectiveness of the timing

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Raymond J. Taylor, “Treating Your Divorced Ex-Spouse with C. A. R. E.: A Model for Post-Divorce Communication,” *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage* 43, nos. 3-4 (2005): 158.

of the programs, or how judges deal with non-compliance.<sup>45</sup>

Some divorcing couples are involved in mediation which can provide good training and practice in communication and negotiating skills to be implemented in years to come. As they bargain and negotiate a plan for the divorce and subsequent parenting in those mediation sessions, they are (hopefully) gaining valuable skills.<sup>46</sup> It would also be good to have a practical, memorable, doable communication model. The Bayer Institute for Health Care Communication in New Haven, Connecticut, developed a successful five-step medical model. Raymond Taylor has adapted that model so it is helpful in divorce communications. The acronym C. A. R. E. is used in this model: (1) *Connect* with the former spouse; (2) *Appreciate* the former spouse's situation; (3) *Respond* to the former spouse's needs; (4) *Empower* the former spouse to problem together; and (5) *Participate* in C. A. R. E. repair with the ex-spouse.<sup>47</sup> Coming straight out of the trenches of a contested divorce, which was anything but caring,<sup>48</sup> this model may seem simplistic and idealistic. And indeed, it will not work for those who focus just on themselves as victims and refuse to do what is good for other parties involved, especially the children. It is helpful to think of treating the divorce as a business situation. This may help to avoid many emotional pitfalls.<sup>49</sup> Treating one another as clients, or as co-workers, on the job of raising children, will work if applied well. The entire family can apply this concept, but especially the parents. The thinking should go like this: If what I just said or did would get me written up, demoted, fired from my job, or cause me to lose a client, then it is out of bounds in communicating with my ex-spouse.

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 159.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

**Connect with the ex-spouse.** One may feel that he or she hates every cell in the ex-spouse’s body, and that there is no way they can “connect.” If one is a Christian, he or she must recognize that the former spouse is a person who is made in God’s image (Gen 1:27). He or she is a “neighbor,” to be loved as oneself (Lev 19:18; Matt 22:39), even when there is no desire to love, or even to like the former spouse. If one can admit that there is a part inside that loves the former spouse, then one can ask the Lord to increase that love, then forgive and ask forgiveness, and move forward. In terms of mechanics, one should use eye contact and good body language. Taylor admonishes that it is not possible to connect with someone while crossing one’s arms or rolling one’s eyes. Word choice and tone of voice must be agreeable if there is to be peace and concord. It might be necessary to be rather formal and to talk about facts and leave emotions out of the conversation. It is helpful to leave the past in the past.<sup>50</sup> If a conversation starts on a positive note, it has the opportunity to end on a positive note as well.

**Appreciate the ex-spouse’s situation.** It helps to put oneself in the ex-spouses shoes. If the ex-spouse feels appreciated, he or she may be more willing to listen, be less defensive, and be more open to an exchange of ideas. Understanding each other’s point of view is priceless. “If I understand you correctly . . .” can take one far down the road to good communication.<sup>51</sup>

**Respond to the ex-spouse’s needs.** Ex-spouses need to listen to one another and clarify anything that could be misunderstood. Arguments are spawned when formers spouses see each other as opponents, forever on opposite sides of every issue. If they can get on the same side of a situation, and work to craft a solution, arguments can be

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 160.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

avoided.<sup>52</sup> This will benefit both parties and the children. Children are the real losers when their parents refuse to address each other's needs. With regard to needs, kids easily detect discord between their parents, and they *need* them to hold it together and to get along.

The real, crucial, burdensome need may be for money. Child support and maintenance is to be paid if it is owed. Even if one does not owe it, he or she can help when possible, especially where minor children are involved. The need may be for help with transportation; one must be eager and willing, which will be pleasing to the Lord and to the former spouse. Jesus was (is) the master at meeting needs as he came to serve and to give, not to be served and to take (Mark 10:45). In the same chapter Jesus asked twice, "What do you want me to do for you" (Mark 10:36, 51)? That is a great question for former spouses to ask each other.

**Empower the ex-spouse to problem solve together.** Working as partners—taking a team approach, and thinking in terms of *we* and *us* instead of *I*, *me*, or *you*—has great value. One must ask questions that are good, not questions that are condescending, that "push buttons," or that are passive-aggressive in nature, which only make a situation worse.<sup>53</sup>

This empowering phase of the C. A. R. E. model is helped along by two additional concepts. First, as mediators understand, profitable negotiation can happen when one undertakes to *understand* the other person, then to *be understood* by the other person. Second, the "10-2-30" communication technique may be helpful. Ex-Spouse 1 speaks without interruption on a given matter for 10 minutes. Next, Ex-Spouse 2 speaks for two minutes, only stating what was stated by Ex-Spouse 1, just the facts, without interpretation. Finally, Ex-Spouse 1 takes thirty seconds to indicate whether or not Ex-

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<sup>52</sup>Taylor, "Treating Your Divorced Ex-Spouse with C. A. R. E.," 160-61.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 161.

Spouse 2 heard and understood (though not necessarily agreed with) what was said. Then roles are reversed and the process is repeated with Ex-Spouse 2 beginning with the ten minute segment. This process continues for as long as it takes to get through an issue. Mechanical and unnatural though it may seem, the opportunity for each to speak without interruption or evaluation from the other is a valuable feature of this communication model.<sup>54</sup>

**Participate in C. A. R. E. repair with the ex-spouse.** When best-laid plans go slantwise, former spouses can have a contingency plan ready. They can evaluate why the C. A. R. E. plan needs an overhaul, and what it will take to do so. Benefits are reaped when problems are restated, anger is accepted, and ex-spouses get on the same side of an issue and draft potential solutions to the problem.<sup>55</sup> Issues of strife between ex-spouses are complex, and seldom resolved in a quick and easy manner. This model assumes a lot—namely, that the ex-spouses are even on speaking terms at all. If they cannot manage to communicate in any effective manner (with patience, without sarcasm), nor by any medium (face-to-face, e-mail, etc.), then they may need pastoral counseling and/or professional assistance in the form of mediation.<sup>56</sup>

### **Divorce and Remarriage Involving Stepfamilies**

In their journal article “Marrying a Man with ‘Baggage:’ Implications for Second Wives,” Knox and Zusman analyzed 274 questionnaires of second wives. It was found that such “baggage” (a man having ex-wives and children) was closely associated with reporting less enjoyment in marriage, ruminating about divorce, and wishing one

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 161-62.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 162.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

had not married their current husband.<sup>57</sup> Second wives are placed in a singular role. They have married men who have had at least one failed marriage previously, and to compound matters, their role includes relationships with non-biological children, and with the new husband's ex-wife.<sup>58</sup> Contending with the ghosts of the current husband's previous marriage(s) to a former wife or wives is a path that many "second wives" find, upon further review, that they cannot walk. Knox and Zusman quote Goetting, who

emphasized the need for boundary maintenance in that the new husband must decide how to relate to his former wife in order to maintain a good co-parenting relationship with her for the benefit of their biological children while keeping an emotional distance from her to prevent problems from developing with his new wife. Some men continue to be emotionally attached to their ex-spouses and have difficulty breaking away. The absence of appropriate boundary maintenance can threaten the new marriage.<sup>59</sup>

Though Knox and Zusman's research is based on a woman marrying a divorced man with his "baggage," some of the same issues would apply to a man marrying a divorced woman. Variables include

stepchildren as a problem . . . negative feelings toward husband's children . . . perceiving that demands of husband's first family impact second family . . . resentment over husband's economic obligations to his first family . . . perceiving that the husband still feels married to his former wife . . . second wife jealous of husband's first wife . . . lack of support from one's own family/friends for marrying a divorced man.<sup>60</sup>

Applications of this research might be to (1) acknowledge the vulnerability of a second marriage; (2) question if living together will be helpful for future marital success; (3) delay marrying a person who has been previously married, and (4) consider starting fresh in a new home.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>David Knox and Marty. E. Zusman, "Marrying a Man with 'Baggage': Implications for Second Wives," *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage* 35, nos. 3-4 (2001): 67.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>59</sup>Ann Goetting, "The Six Stations of Remarriage: Developmental Tasks of Remarriage after Divorce," *Family Coordinator* 31 (1982): 213.

<sup>60</sup>Knox and Zusman, "Marrying a Man with 'Baggage,'" 72-75.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 76-77. I reject implication (2), pertaining to the option of living together before marriage. Such an arrangement is immoral, unhelpful to future marital success, and against the Lord God's

## **Themes and Reactions in the Transformation to Stepfamily Life**

In a study by Stoll et al., 15 adolescents from stepfamilies were interviewed as to their experience in the process of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and stepfamily formation. The group consisted of 6 boys, 9 girls, ages 9-17, all Caucasian, all biological children of the custodial parent, and all spent 75-100 percent of their time in the stepfamily home. Participants were enlisted through mailings sent to 1,200 members of the Stepfamily Association of America and through an advertisement in a local newspaper.<sup>62</sup>

The demographic constraints were: (1) at least one teen, age 12-17, lived at home at least half of the time; (2) at least two years had passed since the divorce or death of the spouse; and (3) the stepfamily had been together one to five years. Six stepfather families, 3 stepmother families, and 3 blended families were interviewed. The average length of marriage was 2.8 years, and there was an average lapse of four years between the end of the biological parents' previous marriage and the remarriage. Ten of the families were formed after separation and divorce (in one case, the non-custodial parent died before a divorce was finalized), 1 after the death of a parent, and 1 after both partners had been single parents.<sup>63</sup>

The interviews lasted 40 to 90 minutes, depending on how long the teen wanted to talk. Two overarching questions were asked: "What has been your experience of the divorce?" and "What has it meant for you to be in this stepfamily?" Clarifying follow-up questions were asked as well.<sup>64</sup> Prominent themes surfaced for the teens

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Word and will.

<sup>62</sup>Barre M. Stoll et al., "Adolescents in Stepfamilies: A Qualitative Analysis," *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage* 44, nos. 1-2 (2005): 179.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 180.

interviewed, reflecting their maneuvering the choppy waters encountered in family transformation through the phases of the divorce and remarriage process. *Resignation and suppression of feelings* were reported during the divorce phase. *Ambivalence* was prominent during the single parenting phase. Five themes came to light during the phase of remarriage and formation of a stepfamily: *sadness and resentment* over losses experienced; *powerlessness* as life-altering events unfold; *confusion and feeling overwhelmed* by changes; *hopefulness and appreciation* regarding some changes; and *finding methods to cope* with changes.<sup>65</sup> Though presented here sequentially, these reactions often overlapped, and teens reported the sense that issues in their lives were left unresolved, even as they moved on in the process. The overarching theme evident through all stages of the “stepfamily adolescent experience” was *coping with losses* that result from divorce and subsequent remarriage and formation of the stepfamily.<sup>66</sup>

Reactions to the divorce included suppression of feelings and frustration. Examples of suppressed feelings were: “I don’t really remember that much;” “I can’t imagine what it would be like if my parents had never gotten a divorce. It’d be weird. I don’t think about it at all;”<sup>67</sup> “I don’t remember anything;” “I cared, but I didn’t care;” and, “I was sad for two days, then I didn’t really notice it.” Reactions of frustration included: “The traveling back and forth every weekend really gets annoying and tedious;” and, “It’s been hard to do sports, ‘cause I miss games and practices and stuff . . . I haven’t done much.” It was found that lack of visitation with the noncustodial parent was associated with the teen having a hard time accepting the stepparent.<sup>68</sup>

Moving from the divorce itself to the single-parent family, reactions were

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 181.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 182.

divided regarding living in a single parent home, especially about the dating encounters of the custodial parent. Three were positive, for example, “I was happy ‘cause she was having fun;” and, “I was glad she went out because we got a babysitter.” Five were neutral: “I didn’t care;” and “It bothered me a little.” Seven indicated distress: “It sucked because he forgot about me;” “He dragged me around on dates—it was bad;” and, “The boyfriend was bad; he was mean to us and she just let him.”<sup>69</sup>

Reactions to the remarriage and stepfamily also include the subthemes of efforts to cope and hopefulness about the future,<sup>70</sup> but also a lot of trouble for minors still at home. This trouble was evidenced by three more subthemes: (1) losses in relationships, privacy, and space which resulted in sadness, resentment, and anger; (2) powerlessness amid the commotion and turbulence of their lives; and (3) feelings of being overwhelmed and confused by the many changes happening in and around them.<sup>71</sup> Losses of intimacy and quality time with the custodial parent were repeatedly mentioned. A typical response was: “There was kind of a space—because she had someone else to talk to about all this stuff. I guess I got kind of jealous of him (the stepfather), because before they got married, I had all this time with my mom.”<sup>72</sup>

Relocating to a new home and the loss of the previous home, friends, family, school, and time with the noncustodial parent left the adolescent with feelings of resentment and loss: “If I could change something, I’d still want to be in the same school, and have the same friends;” and, “I’d like to be closer to my dad.”<sup>73</sup> Participants agreed that the resulting distance from extended biological family necessitated by stepfamily

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 183.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

formation was hurtful. This was compounded by the fact that biological parents did not grasp the importance of those connections for their children—this was “an additional source of pain.”<sup>74</sup>

The loss of personal space and privacy was owned by participants in the study. The (new) home was more crowded, and the stepfamily members were seen as infringing on the boundaries of the adolescent: “It was my stepsister’s house and we had to share the room and it was really bad because she doesn’t like the same things that I like;” and, “I feel like a clam in a real tight area . . . a really tight area. I feel restricted.”<sup>75</sup>

Feelings of powerlessness were associated with new family rules, values, and unequal enforcement of rules among stepsiblings:<sup>76</sup> “(My stepfather will) try to take the place of my father by telling me what to do, and I’ll get mad at him and say . . . ‘You’re not my father’ . . .” Confusion about the new power structure, being left out of decision making, and divided loyalties surfaced as stressors. Participants expressed that they did not want anyone to think their stepparent was their parent: “I always want to say, ‘He’s not my real dad,’ but I don’t.”<sup>77</sup>

While the study brought to light many obvious themes of distress and struggle, there were also indications of resiliency, strategies for coping, and elements of stepfamily life that were helpful and that were liked and appreciated. Almost all of the interviewees revealed some appreciation for their new stepfamily. Holidays were made better by the larger stepfamily; there were more gifts and a “family-like” atmosphere. But they were also clear that they wanted to continue their relationships with previous extended family,

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<sup>74</sup>Stoll et al., “Adolescents in Stepfamilies,” 183.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 184.

and were displeased when their parents had no concern for this.<sup>78</sup>

Three study participants were pleased with the support and friendship they received from their stepparent and appreciated that advantage of being in a stepfamily. Positive relations with the stepparent were thus aided by seeing the relationship more as a friendship than a parent-child connection. Most participants were unwilling for the stepparent to try to replace the non-custodial biological parent; if this occurred it would tend to hijack the stepparent/teen relationship. Respect and care from the stepparent, along with time—"go slowly," one teen advised—aided a positive connection in these relationships.<sup>79</sup>

Attitude, flexibility, and participation in school and outside activities were major players in the adjustment process.<sup>80</sup> Friendships with others living in stepfamilies were especially helpful. Most participants, however, were not so positive and found retreating to their bedrooms, disregarding the stepparent, or talking with siblings or friends to be solutions to stressful stepfamily life.<sup>81</sup> The four participants who fared best emphasized positive aspects of their association with their stepparent. A seventeen year old said, "He's kind of a friend. I feel . . . he really cares about me and has respect for me which makes me feel really good about our relationship. . . . And I trust him a lot."<sup>82</sup>

The teen participants felt strongly about what mattered to them in the process of stepfamily formation, and what they missed, resented, or wanted to change. They focused on seven desires and/or needs: (1) time to adapt to changes; (2) to be consulted and informed; (3) for the parent to discuss changes; (4) to be considered in the decision-

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

making process; (5) to have time alone with their biological parent and time alone with the stepparent; (6) for their parents to acknowledge the hardships they incurred during family rearrangement; and, (7) to be understood and treated with forbearance.<sup>83</sup>

The interviewees noticed and resented inequality in treatment among siblings. Those who relocated wished they lived closer to their noncustodial biological parent<sup>84</sup> and to their original friends.<sup>85</sup> The negative, unhappy teens as well as the positive, happy ones clearly articulated their wish to not have their family be a stepfamily. One well-adjusted teen's statement represented the group well: "I don't really know if there's anything that I could think of that I would really change because the stepfamily is just . . . kind of wacky. I wouldn't really, if I had a choice, I really wouldn't want one."<sup>86</sup>

### **Loss of Being in the Children of Divorce and What the Church Can Do**

Andrew Root asserts "that divorce is primarily an issue not of social capital and simple psychology, but of ontology. Ontology, the loss of being, is the real issue of divorce and as such has the secondary effect of impacting a child's affect and psychological stability."<sup>87</sup>

Children of divorce need the church as a true community. This, the church as a community must help children of divorce to "solidify their shaken ontology."<sup>88</sup> God's power is made known in Jesus Christ's suffering weakness, who acts by giving up His

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid. For more on stepfamily relationships, see appendix 21, "Factors Facilitating Transition to Stepfamily Life."

<sup>87</sup>Andrew Root, *The Children of Divorce: The Loss of Family as the Loss of Being* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 89.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 121.

own being so that we could find ours. This new community, the church, cannot take the place of, and must not sublimate the family, but gives “the “broken family a place to be-with and be-for as they suffer their ontological trauma.”<sup>89</sup> The biological union of parents is irreplaceable, and nothing can erase the children’s scars and wounds that are left by their parents’ divorce. However, in a church community that suffers with the children and for them, children of divorce can be assured that they are real, that their suffering is embraced in practical ways by the people called the church body, and “who witness to a God in Jesus Christ who bears our brokenness.”<sup>90</sup>

What may be needed more than anything else is for the church universal to see that divorce is not merely a societal problem palliated by psychology and social services. These services can be good and helpful at times, but they do not get to the heart of the matter.<sup>91</sup> The church might better serve the world and the millions of young people going through the divorce of their parents by working from the assumption that divorce is primarily an ontological issue. It is an act that leaves its children-victims feeling lost and unreal in an unreliable world. Divorce shakes people to their very core, heart, and substance and causes them to live the rest of their lives with scars and questions. The church must alert the world to this reality, then suffer with the sufferers. The church can and must bring hope to towns and communities and proclaim there is a power more pure and strong than a mother’s love, and that power is found in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, able and eager to hold the child of divorce securely.<sup>92</sup>

Root relates the tragedy of divorce in a personal way as he tells of his own experience, and that of his wife, with regard to the impact of their parents’ divorces.

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

Especially touched were their senses of identity and of their places in the world:

Just months after my parents' divorce was finalized, my mom moved out of our family home, a house my family had lived in since I was in kindergarten. . . . I realized that this house, this place where I became me, would no longer be part of my life. I silently grieved that I would never be able to take my own children to this house, showing them the basement where I had played hours and hours of floor hockey, shooting a worn tennis ball into the back of a net, working out who I was as I contemplated the mysteries of the universe with stick in hand.

I suppose that even if my parents had stayed together, they more than likely would have moved to another house and eventually given some stranger the keys to the place where I became me. This felt different. It wasn't so much that the title of house was no longer in my family's name; it was that the family that once lived within its walls no longer existed. . . . With my mom's move the family house I had known for twenty years seemed to disappear into the infinitely deep crack that now separated my parents. It felt like the house had not simply transferred ownership but had been negated; it had been eliminated from the universe, and my place in the world went with it.

This negation of family home for me came with none of the drama that it did for Kara (Andrew's wife). After the divorce of her parents, the suburban hobby farm where her family lived was sold to a developer, who, having no need for the house itself, allowed the local fire department to set it ablaze as a training exercise, literally reducing it to a heap of ashes. After the house burned to the ground, bulldozers showed up to radically transform the topography . . . to serve the rapidly encroaching cul-de-sacs and suburban streets. Halfway through the destruction process, Kara's sixteen-year-old sister, Callie, visited the site. In the early evening air, all alone, Callie climbed into the tree house that still remained nestled in the broad branches of the large tree that stood next to where the house had been. Sitting there overlooking the ugly emptiness that had swallowed her home, she could only cry. This little tree house, which had fallen out of use as the children had become teenagers, was all that remained of the family that had lived in this place.

As she sat there, between her tears and breaths she could hear the faint sound of whining. Collecting herself, she climbed down to investigate. It was a cat, and not just any cat, but their family cat, "Momma Cat," who had lived both inside their home and outside in the small barn that had also been burnt to the ground. Standing there looking at Momma Cat, now surrounded by plowed dirt and vacant lots, she felt as lost and utterly abandoned as the cat. Without this place, this farm, Momma Cat was simply an old stray, worthless to most. Without this place, without *home* (author's emphasis), Callie—and Kara and I as well—wondered if in our parents' divorce we had ourselves become strays, people without a place, people without belonging.<sup>93</sup>

### Conclusion

The legal, historical, cultural, and sociological implications of marriage, divorce, and remarriage were addressed in this chapter. From the earliest colonial days

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 119-20.

and the very first divorce, through the turns of four centuries, divorce laws were reviewed. As for the current status of divorce laws, beginning with the 1960s and moving forward, no-fault divorce, the doubling of the divorce rate, and the two basic types of divorce were expounded. The impact of divorce on physical and psychological health was addressed, along with a model for communication between ex-spouses. The results of a questionnaire of second wives indicated the vulnerability of second marriages, while the results of a study of teens revealed an overarching theme of the need for coping with various losses associated with divorce, remarriage, and stepfamily living. In the final segment, the ontological loss of being was posited as the true issue in divorce; the church's role of suffering with the suffering child of divorce was maintained.

## CHAPTER 4

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This chapter details the creation and implementation of the project. Phase 1 covers the enlistment of participants and general logistics. In phase 2 the reader will find a description of how the project was submitted to scrutiny in two ways: by peer reviews of sermons and field tests of research instruments. Phase 3 details the development process of the sermons written for the project. Phase 4 looks at miscellaneous preparations that were completed prior to the first week of the project—the initial meeting, and communication with peer reviewers. Finally, phase 5, “Commencing the Project Proper,” details each of the fifteen weeks of this project.

#### **Phase 1: Enlistment of Participants**

Several correspondences were prepared and sent. One correspondence was an enlistment letter that was sent with a commitment form (see appendices 6 and 7), which were sent to everyone (members and non-members) in both churches. The letter stated the title, purpose, and goals of the project as well as expectations, an exhortation, and an invitation to participate. It also explained that there would be an initial meeting for participants at which they could ask questions and take two pre-tests. The commitment form went into more detail on the expectations.

A letter was also written to those who had signed up for the project by responding to the enlistment letter (see appendix 8). In the letter I thanked them for their willingness to participate and reminded them of the obligations they had agreed to when they signed the commitment form. I once again reminded participants of the date of the initial meeting, the date the sermon series would start, and the date of the weekend

retreat. Regarding the initial meeting, the letter explained that it would include a meal, prayer, fellowship, a question-and-answer session, and administration of the pre-tests. The letter concluded with an exhortation to call on the Lord for the outworking of the project, and to call me for clarification of any questions about the project.

## **Phase 2: Submitting Content to Scrutiny**

### **Peer Reviews of Sermon Content**

In seeking for the content to be peer-reviewed, I sent a “Survey of Pastor-Theologians to Measure the Accuracy of the Biblical Doctrine of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage Presented in Project Sermons” (see appendix 5) to 10 pastors along with a cover letter (see appendix 13) and a “Sermon Reviewer Response Form” (see appendix 14). The cover letter delineated the title, purpose, and goals of the project as well as the reason their input was being sought. It indicated that if they chose to participate, they may review one sermon or as many as eight sermons. They were told that reviewing all of the sermons might be difficult, since I was asking them to look carefully at each sermon text and each sermon (extended outline or manuscript) as they fill out the survey. On the Response Form, which contained an anonymous option, the reviewer was to indicate whether he would participate, how many sermons he would review, which sermon(s) he would review, and information about his academic credentials.

### **Field Test of Surveys**

A correspondence was sent to 18 people who might agree to field-test two research instruments to be used in the project. Those instruments were the “Survey on Participant’s Knowledge of Old and New Testament Teachings Concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage” (see appendix 1), and “Survey of Attitudes toward and Practice of OT and NT Teachings on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage” (see appendix 2).

## **Phase 3: Sermon Preparation**

The first sermon was a preview of the series, and the tenth sermon was a

review. The middle eight core sermons comprised the main content of the series. The eight passages on which the sermons were based were Genesis 2:18-25, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Malachi 2:10-16, Matthew 19:3-12, 1 Corinthians 7:1-24, 1 Corinthians 7:25-40, Ephesians 5:21-6:9, and 1 Peter 3:1-7.

### **Description of the Sermon Development Process**

Prayer started the process, finished the process, and was vital throughout the process of sermon preparation. I often prayed right from specific scriptures that had to do with preaching (2 Tim 4:1-8), with special emphasis on scriptural prayers that focused on the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching (1 Cor 2:4-5). Next, I read the sermon text in various translations, identified the genre of the passage, looked for literary devices (chiasm, for example), and looked for appropriate cross reference verses.

The exegetical work came next with attention to word studies. I checked my work with various commentaries. Finally, I wrote the main points, transitions, theme statement, title, illustrations, applications, introduction, conclusion, “The Big Story” (stating where the passages are located in redemptive history, and where we are in the story), and “The Big Question” (calling for a verdict).

### **Phase 4: Initial Meeting**

My wife, Lisa, and I hosted a “kick-off”—the initial meeting to officially begin the project proper. After prayer, we enjoyed an excellent meal prepared by Lisa, signed marriage retreat forms, filled out a demographic information sheet, read the research ethics protocol statement, explained the two pre-test surveys, took the surveys, explained what to expect during the fifteen weeks of the project, answered questions, and ended with informal time together to conclude the evening.

At this initial meeting we also discussed the retreat and its location. It was purposely planned to be far enough away that participants would not be tempted to leave the retreat to run errands between sessions, but close enough to be practical. At the

meeting, 18 signed up for the retreat portion of the project (3 single men, 3 single women, and 6 couples—though only 14 actually attended). All 18 were involved in the sermon series portion as well. Approximately 10 others, who were unable to attend the initial meeting, indicated that they would participate in the sermon series portion of the project, though probably not the retreat portion.

### **Phase 5: Commencing the Project Proper**

For the first ten weeks of the fifteen-week project I followed a simple two-point plan: (1) summarize the most recent sermon and finalize the sermon for the coming week and, (2) plan the retreat logistics, sessions, and handbook. Weeks 11 through 15 can generally be categorized as miscellaneous final preparations.

An estimated average of fifteen hours had already been put into each sermon in previous weeks and months, so during each week of the project it was truly a *finalizing*, not a hurried, last-ditch effort to pull a sermon together. There are eight core, expository sermons based on eight key Scripture passages, with a preview sermon before the series began, and a review sermon after the eighth core sermon was preached. Thus the sermon series was a total of ten weeks long.

In the finalizing of each sermon the week prior to preaching, my focus was on praying for the preaching and hearing of God's Word, input from peer reviewers, studying the section from chapter 2 that pertained to that week's passage, reviewing my sermon manuscript, reviewing my extended outline, and reducing the content to a sermon outline for the congregation on Sunday morning.

### **Week 1: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 1 sermon and the preview sermon.** The project was launched on Sunday, September 14, with the first sermon. That sermon was the preview sermon mentioned above, which introduced each of the eight core sermons that would be preached in coming weeks.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** During the week of September 14, with about eleven weeks remaining until the retreat, I began to prepare for that weekend. Praying for the retreat was the starting point of the preparation. I began to pray specifically for three things: (1) that the Lord God would be magnified and glorified as His people understood His Word, and gained His wisdom, regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage; (2) that retreat participants, and all others who subsequently read this project, would put the principles from God's Word into practice in their own lives; and (3) that couples would stay married, divorcing only with biblical grounds, and that even when there are biblical grounds for a divorce, that the married couple would stay together by God's grace.

During week 1 I also planned the agenda for the weekend retreat. I communicated by phone and electronic mail with Living Waters Bible Camp, where the retreat was held, to find out what times they would be serving meals so that I could plan accordingly. There were six main sessions, along with a worship service on Sunday morning, and a group interview at the end of the weekend (see appendix 9 for agenda).

The retreat included six sessions that lasted about seventy-five minutes each. These sessions focused on specific discussion questions and practical application of scriptural principles from the five passages covered in chapter 2 (Gen 2:18-25; Deut 24:1-5; Mal 2:10-16; Matt 19:3-12; 1 Cor 7:1-24; and 1 Cor 7:25-40), plus a session covering the Book of Ruth. During each of the six sessions a new scripture relating to marriage was also read.

## **Week 2: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 2 sermon on Genesis 2:18-25.** A synopsis of this passage can be found in chapter 2. An extended outline for this sermon can be found in appendix 15.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** This week I worked on session 1 of the retreat. This session, on Friday, December 5, included a hymn, prayer, reading of Genesis 2:18-25, and a review of the sermon outline (main points, The Sermon-in-a-Sentence, The Big Question). This passage was explored through the use of about twenty discussion questions. The session ended with a reading of 1 Corinthians 13.

On Wednesday nights during the project I distributed copies of the previous week's sermon outline to those who were absent. I also distributed hard copies of chapter 2 to those without electronic mail. Those with online capacity received it electronically. Chapter 2, "Biblical and Theological Support for Preaching a Biblical Doctrine of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," was provided in order to give project participants a broader knowledge of the topic in areas that were not necessarily addressed in the sermons. A digital recording of each sermon, as well as the sermon outline, were also made available at [www.reedsburgfirstbaptist.net](http://www.reedsburgfirstbaptist.net).

### **Week 3: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 3 sermon on Deuteronomy 24:1-5.** A synopsis of this passage can be found in chapter 2. An extended outline for this sermon can be found in appendix 15.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** Preparations for session 2 of the retreat were made this week. This session, on Saturday morning, December 6, included a hymn, prayer, and discussion questions based on Deuteronomy 24:1-5. The session ended with a reading of Romans 12:9-21, which contains many exhortations relevant to marriage. I also spent time this week planning what would be included in the handbook used at the retreat.

#### **Week 4: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 4 sermon on Malachi 2:10-16.** A synopsis of this passage can be found in chapter 2. An extended outline for this sermon can be found in appendix 15.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** Preparations for session 3 of the retreat were made this week. This session, just before lunch on Saturday morning, December 6, included a hymn, prayer, and discussion questions based on Malachi 2:10-16. The session ended with a reading of Matthew 22:1-14, the parable of the wedding banquet. I also spent time this week planning what would be included in the handbook that was used at the retreat.

#### **Week 5: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 5 sermon on Matthew 19:3-12.** A synopsis of this passage can be found in chapter 2. An extended outline for this sermon can be found in appendix 15.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions and miscellany.** The preaching of the sermon for week 5 was delayed by one week because I was on a mission trip in Guatemala. During the time on mission I was able to make preparations for session 4 of the retreat. This session, on Saturday afternoon, December 6, included a hymn, prayer, and discussion questions based on Matthew 19:3-12. The session ended with a reading of Song of Solomon 8:6-7. I also spent time this week continuing to plan what would be included in the handbook used at the retreat.

#### **Week 6: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 6 sermon on 1 Corinthians 7:1-24.** A synopsis of this passage can be found in chapter 2. An extended outline for this sermon can be found in appendix 15.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** Preparations for session 5 of the retreat were made this week. This session, after dinner on Saturday evening, December 6, included a hymn, prayer, and discussion questions based on 1 Corinthians 7:1-40. This lengthy passage comprised the content of two of the sermons preached. The session ended with a reading of Psalm 45:1-17.

### **Week 7: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 7 sermon on 1 Corinthians 7:25-40.** A synopsis of this passage can be found in chapter 2. An extended outline for this sermon can be found in appendix 15.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** Preparations for session 6 of the retreat were made this week. This session, after breakfast and a worship service on Sunday morning, December 7, included a reading and guided discussion of the book of Ruth. This discussion was followed by an open forum for final thoughts, questions, and commitments on the topic of the biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

After this session of the retreat was completed, and after a break, the group interview was conducted. The questions for the group interview, and a summary of responses can be found in appendices 3 and 11. Then the post-test surveys (appendices 1 and 2) would be distributed, with instructions that they were to be completed and returned within one week. The retreat would conclude with lunch together.

### **Week 8: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 8 sermon on Ephesians 5:21-33.** A synopsis of this passage is not found in chapter 2 since it was not one of the five key passages studied in that chapter. An extended outline for this sermon can be found in appendix 15.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** At this point in the project the entire retreat had been planned: dates and numbers of attendees had been

confirmed with the camp, all six retreat sessions were in place, and the group interview was set. I assembled a prototype of the retreat handbook which included sections for the retreat agenda, each of the six sessions, the group interview, and material on the two sermons that were part of the ten-week sermon series, but were not part of the retreat. This week I reviewed and revised the content of the six sessions and the group interview, specifically to ensure that the discussion questions were relevant, practical, and helpful.

### **Week 9: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 9 sermon on 1 Peter 3:1-7.** A synopsis of this passage is not found in chapter 2, since it was not one of the five key passages studied in that chapter. An extended outline for this sermon can be found in appendix 15.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** During week 9 I continued to review and revise the content of the upcoming retreat. I also spoke with nine other pastors to promote the retreat to them, as we had room for people from other churches to attend. As it was, 1 couple dropped out, so we had 16 signed up—5 couples, plus 3 single women and 3 single men. I let the pastors know that the retreat follows a ten-week sermon series. They were also informed that surveys and interviews were part of the process, but that those who might attend from their churches would not be expected to be involved in those. The retreat would be beneficial as a stand-alone event, without the sermon series and other aspects that participants in the full project completed. Further, the pastors were informed that the retreat would not be a typical Marriage Encounter-style weekend, but rather would focus specifically on practical application of a biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

### **Week 10: Detailed Description**

**Summary of week 10 sermon, the review sermon.** On Sunday, September 14, the first sermon was preached; that sermon was a preview of the entire series. During the next eight weeks, the eight core sermons were preached. On November 23, the final

sermon was preached, which reviewed the previous eight sermons. The emphasis in the review was on application, going back over the main points, the Sermon-in-a-Sentence, and The Big Question for each message.

**Planning retreat logistics and sessions, and miscellany.** During week 10 my wife and I did a final review of the content of the retreat. Our focus was mostly on the discussion questions for the six sessions, but we also went over the agenda and other content for the weekend. Her input was important as she brought a woman's perspective to the retreat planning.

A flyer for the retreat was also developed. The retreat had already been promoted in-house to the two churches, but since there was room to allow people from other churches to attend, I produced the flyer for that purpose. Further, I visited the owner of the print shop to find out when he would need me to have the final product of the retreat handbook ready for him to print.

### **Week 11: Detailed Description**

**Final preparations.** At this point, the material for the retreat—welcome letter, agenda, sessions (including all discussion questions), worksheets, sermon outlines, extended outlines, and the group interview—was complete and ready to be taken to the print shop. I met twice with their planner and described the handbook that they would produce from the content given to them.

### **Week 12: Detailed Description**

**Final preparations: Sunday through Thursday.** Tidying up loose ends for the retreat was the main business in the early part of this week. Final attendance figures were provided to the camp as they requested. I checked with a greeting card company about permission to use one of their copyrighted cards in our handbook; permission was granted. Regarding the handbook, there were e-mails, visits, and phone calls to be made to the print shop pertaining to the final cost per handbook, as well as the order of its

pages, and creative design. I brought a prototype of the handbook to the Wednesday Bible study as some had desired to see it before the retreat. At the Bible study we prayed for the retreat. Looking through the outlines and discussion questions for the six sessions of the retreat, I began to fill in my copy of the handbook.

**The retreat weekend: Friday through Sunday.** The day of the retreat finally arrived! This was a big, exciting day—the culmination of many months of preparation. Fourteen were in attendance, though 19 had originally signed up. Some were kept away for health reasons, while others could not get the weekend off of work. Weather kept no one away; it was perfect.

We spent the weekend enjoying fellowship with one another in general, and conducting the retreat sessions in particular: praying, singing, watching video snippets related to marriage, reviewing and discussing the sermons and Bible passages related to our topic, and conducting the group interview(see appendix 9 for retreat agenda,). At the end I made the post-tests available (to be returned within a week or so), and asked each person to schedule an individual exit interview with me in the next few weeks.

### **Week 13: Detailed Description**

The retreat had just concluded. In some ways, this was a week of waiting as, for one thing, I was waiting for post-tests to be returned to me. I met with Dalibor Bjelich, who has earned an advanced degree in computer science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Since I do not have a secretary, I contracted with him to help with further proofreading for typographical errors, margins, pagination, and technical matters—basically editing. He also helped with t-testing, and with developing tables of data from the pre- and post-tests. I met with him several times over the next few weeks.

### **Week 14: Detailed Description**

During the morning worship service I distributed post-tests to the several who had not yet received one. I reminded project participants that the tests would be due in ten

days—by the time of the Christmas Eve service at the latest.

Conducting individual exit interviews (appendices 4, 17) began this week. I conducted these interviews mostly by phone. Just as the group interview was given only to those who took part in the sermon series as well as the retreat—not to those who participated in the sermon phase only—so the individual exit interviews were given only to those who participated both in the sermon series and the retreat.

### **Week 15: Detailed Description**

During this final week of the project I progressed in chapter 4, wrote the abstract, and continued to conduct individual exit interviews by phone. Christmas Eve fell on Wednesday of this week. Post-tests were due by the time of the Christmas Eve service. My wife graded the surveys for me and helped to chart the results.

### **Conclusion**

The following project phases were accomplished, as described in this chapter: phase 1: enlistment of participants; phase 2: submitting content to scrutiny (peer reviews and field tests); phase 3: sermon preparation; phase 4: miscellaneous preparations prior to week 1 of the project (initial meeting, and communication with peer reviewers); and phase 5: Commencing the Project Proper (a week-by-week summary of the project development process).

The research data in chapter 5 shows that the project was successful in accomplishing its goals, and that it was beneficial to the 29 project participants.

This project process was an arduous yet joyful experience for me as I worked diligently to make it as excellent as possible. I sat back and watched as the Lord God blessed and brought it together in ways that I could not have planned. I was blessed and honored as I got to know God's Word and God's people, the eager and dedicated project participants, in a closer way; the fellowship was a valued treasure.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT EVALUATION

#### **Introduction**

This chapter evaluates the work in this project and concludes that the project fulfilled its purpose, and the four goals have been met. I assess the strengths and weaknesses of the work, as well as what I would do differently if I were to do the project again.

#### **Evaluation of Research Data**

The data analyzed was drawn from the pre- and post-test responses from two instruments. Twenty-eight participants took both of the pre-and post-tests. The first of those instruments was the “Survey of Attitudes toward and Practice of Old and New Testament Teachings on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage” (see appendix 1). This survey contained twelve questions with responses based on a six-point Likert scale. The pre- and post-test response averages are found in appendix 18, the actual responses are in appendix 19, and the t-test results are in appendix 20.

The second of the instruments was the “Survey of Knowledge of Old and New Testament Teachings Concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage” (see appendix 2). This test contained thirty true/false, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank questions. Its results, tracking the positive change for each respondent, are summarized in appendix 21.

Further data was obtained from the “Survey of Pastor-Theologians to Measure the Accuracy of the Biblical Doctrine of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage Presented in Project Sermons” (see appendix 5). This data cannot be quantified, but I received quality input that helped to balance and correct my sermons.

More data—again, not quantifiable—was obtained by way of three additional

research instruments: (1) a field test of the two main research surveys found in appendices 1 and 2 (see also the “Field Test Cover Letter” in appendix 10); (2) a “Post-Sermon Series, Post-Retreat Group Interview” (see appendix 3, with a summary of responses in appendix 11); and (3) a “Post-Retreat Individual Exit Interview” (see appendix 4; actual responses in appendix 17).

### **Evaluation of Project Goals**

The first goal of this project was to evaluate the participants’ attitudes, practices, and biblical knowledge regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This goal was measured by means of two surveys given to all participants in the project. In the case of the first survey, this goal was considered successfully met since the t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-test scores. The results were deemed extremely significant from a statistical standpoint. The null hypothesis was rejected; the intervention brought about significant change (see appendices 18-20). In the case of the second survey, this goal was deemed successfully met when post-test results showed a positive change over pre-test results. This occurred when the 28 respondents had an average improvement of 6.35 in correct answers, out of thirty questions. This amounts to a 16.8 percent increase in correct answers per respondent (see appendix 21).

The second goal of this project was for me to develop a biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage by studying Old and New Testament passages with a view to preaching and teaching those passages. This goal was measured by a survey given to theologically trained peers who read the sermon manuscripts. This Likert survey (see appendix 5) had a sample size of 1 reviewer and there was no way to draw any statistical conclusions. Only 1 pastor of the 12 to whom I wrote or spoke with was able to perform the sermon reviews; even some who had agreed to help had to back out. Nonetheless, this goal was to be considered successfully met if I was able to explain all of the Scriptures that address marriage, divorce, and remarriage and be aware of and

conversant in alternate interpretations. This was a lofty goal, and also one that could not be measured statistically. Have I met this goal? Can I “explain all of the Scriptures . . . “? Am I “conversant in alternate interpretations”? Yes, but there is much more that I can learn. By God’s grace I have made massive progress in the right direction during the course of this project.

The third goal of this project was to equip participants by preaching the series of ten sermons explaining and applying the biblical teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This goal was measured by a group interview given to project participants from the two congregations (see appendix 11). This goal was deemed successfully met when, having been thus equipped, specific and agreed upon individual and corporate actions were taken to bring the biblical perspective to fruition in the life of the churches. Those actions were discussed in the group interview; it remains to be seen how the churches will carry those out in the coming years.

The fourth goal of this project was to further equip participants by teaching from a handbook of eight lessons to reinforce and strengthen the biblical knowledge, attitude, and practice of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This handbook comprised the content of a weekend retreat. This goal was measured by means of individual exit interviews with participants (see appendix 4). This goal was deemed successfully met when, in each individual participant’s handbook, there was an action plan in place to practice at least one key behavior from each sermon and from each lesson. Of course, an action plan does not guarantee successful results. And, as above, it remains to be seen how the churches will respond in coming months and years. We will be intentional with meetings that revisit these issues.

### **Evaluation of Project Process, Including an Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses**

In evaluating the process used in this project, the five phases of the project’s construction provide the outline. The five phases were (1) Enlistment of Participants, (2)

Submitting Content to Scrutiny, (3) Sermon Preparation, (4) Miscellaneous Preparations Prior to Week 1 of the Project, and (5) Commencing the Project Proper.

### **Evaluation of Phase 1: Enlistment of Participants**

Participants were enlisted via personal invitation, exhortations from the pulpit, and recruitment letters (see appendices 6, 7, and 8).

**Summary of main strengths and weaknesses of phase 1.** As far as strengths, the series of enlistment and commitment letters was well-organized and clear. The commitment numbers were strong also: 28 committed to the sermon portion (21 from First Baptist, and 7 from Big Spring). This is a significant number of people considering each church only has about 30 in attendance each week for the main worship service. It was also an answer to prayer as I had been praying for 30 to participate. Of that 28, 19 signed up for the retreat portion of the project, although only 14 ended up attending (12 from First Baptist, 1 from Big Spring, plus me). During an individual exit interview by phone, one woman told my wife and me that she did not really want to attend the retreat, but did so and had a great experience. She said, “I did it for you, Pastor Bob.” Both my wife and I understood her meaning: she knew how much it meant to me for her, and for as many as possible, to attend the retreat. She knew that this project was the most important fifteen weeks of my professional life, and that the retreat weekend in particular was the most important weekend of my career to this point. These are small churches with big hearts, a family committed to the Lord, and to their pastor.

During this first phase I did not discern any obvious weaknesses.

### **Evaluation of Phase 2: Submitting Content to Scrutiny**

Research ethics protocols by the seminary faculty and administration, peer-reviews of sermons by pastor-theologians, and field tests of surveys by people from churches in other parts of the state provided the scrutiny that is needed in such an

undertaking as this. The research ethics protocols were routine, and I received approval to proceed with my research on human subjects. Wanting to make this once-in-a-lifetime project as robust, excellent, and accountable as possible, I subjected my sermons to scrutiny by pastor-theologians who, through a questionnaire (see appendix 5), gave input on the theology of the sermons. I also submitted my research instruments to lay people who, through field tests, gave input on the surveys.

**Summary of main strengths and weaknesses of phase 2.** Part of the strength of phase 2 was my desire, as mentioned, to be robust, excellent, and accountable. For the peer-reviews of the sermons, approximately 12 pastors were asked by way of a letter sent by the postal service to be reviewers: 5 agreed to do so, 2 respectfully declined, and 5 did reply at all. For the 5 who did commit to do the sermon reviews, I had an excellent survey tool, and communicated thoroughly by e-mail and letter (see appendices 13 and 14). I provided sermon outlines, extended outlines, sermon manuscripts, and access to chapter 2 (the biblical and theological perspective on the sermon texts) for their reference. I provided the dates by which I needed to have their work returned to me, and ways for them to opt out altogether (or slim down their commitment) if they felt they could not fulfill what they had agreed to do. They were told they could review 1 sermon, or all 8 of them and that they could be thorough or general in their reviews, spending much time or little time. Of the 5 pastors who committed to peer reviews, 3 committed to review *some* of the sermons, and 2 agreed to review *all* of the sermons.

Regarding the 3 pastors who agreed to review some of the sermons, together they committed to review a total of 12 sermons. Only 1 sermon review was accomplished among the three men who had agreed to do 12. All 3 had to opt out for various reasons, including health. Regarding the 2 pastors who agreed to review all of the sermons, 1 of them did, and the other later declined to do any of them. The one who reviewed all of them did what he agreed to do with excellence. He gave valuable, critical input. That reviewer is Ross Layne, pastor of Grace Community Church in West Allis, Wisconsin,

and a Ph.D. graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Another part of being robust, excellent, and accountable in this project was to submit my surveys to those from other churches who would field test them. Only 7 of 18 returned the field tests of the two surveys, and of those, only 1 of the 7 had written anything substantial and helpful.

It may be a weakness that for all intents and purposes, only 2 pastors reviewed any of the sermons (one reviewed all; another reviewed one sermon), though 5 had agreed to review *at least* one, and only 1 lay person to field test surveys, though 18 had been given the opportunity. In the case of the pastors, I think my letters of instruction, explanation, and willingness to allow them latitude in their level of commitment were good, and I do not know what I would do differently. I might do it the same next time, hoping for just 1 or 2 reviewers to make a difference such as Ross Layne did. In the case of the lay people who field-tested the surveys, I would recruit them differently if I did this project again. I would not give the 18 surveys to 2 couples to bring to their home churches a couple of hours away, have them hand the surveys out to people who would field-test them, then collect them and return the surveys to me. The 2 couples did what they were supposed to do. But next time I would ask a pastor in our town if I could meet with the adults in his Wednesday night meeting (probably a pretty committed group), explain the project, explain the need for field-tests of surveys, take their questions, have them do the field-test, collect them the same night, and be gratefully on my way.

### **Evaluation of Phase 3: Sermon Preparation**

In chapter 4, which describes the development of the project, I review the sermon preparation process.

**Summary of main strengths and weaknesses of phase 3.** The strengths of this phase of sermon preparation are the breadth of the passages used in the series—both Old and New Testaments, from all points in redemptive history, from various genres, and

from various human authors of God's inspired Word. There is strength also in the fact that I prepared these sermons weeks and months in advance, and finalized them the week prior to preaching them. They were not rushed nor thrown together at the last minute. Repetition was another strength: we kicked off with a preview sermon, watched and listened as God's Word ran (τρέχει, 2 Thess 3:1) through 8 core sermons, continued with a review sermon, then again read and discussed the sermon passages in depth at the retreat.

I do not see any great or obvious weaknesses in the sermon preparation process, but I am always glad to have input, and to stand corrected when necessary. One weakness in the sermon preparation phase may be that my process can be too regimented and mechanical.

#### **Evaluation of Phase 4: Miscellaneous Preparations Prior to Week 1 of the Project**

The miscellaneous preparations that happened in this phase were just two: (1) the initial meeting in which participants signed up to be involved in the project, signed the commitment form, and took the pre-test; and (2) communication with peer reviewers.

**Summary of main strengths and weaknesses of phase 4.** The strength of the initial meeting was its energy, excitement, sense of anticipation, camaraderie, and joy. It was well-organized and those involved enjoyed it, even though there was much business to be accomplished. After the meeting many stayed on for close to an hour, enjoying the fellowship.

Regarding weaknesses, it might have been better if I had offered this initial meeting at two different times since some could not make it to the initial meeting and had to get the information and take the pre-test on their own.

## **Evaluation of Phase 5: Commencing the Project Proper**

“The project proper” indicates what transpired during the actual fifteen weeks of the project, which was recorded in the last phase of chapter 4. There my method is described: each of the first ten weeks were devoted to summarizing the previous sermon, finalizing the coming sermon, and then planning retreat logistics, sessions, and handbook. The last five weeks involved miscellaneous final preparations and finally, the retreat itself.

**Summary of main strengths and weaknesses of phase 5.** Part of the strength of this phase, which is true of the project in general, is that it was done in a systematic, organized manner. I knew exactly what needed to occur each of the fifteen weeks to finish the project in a timely way, without a panicked rush at the end. Prayer was another strength—my wife and I prayed much for the project, and often asked others to pray as well.

No significant weaknesses are apparent to me in phase 5.

### **Theological Reflections**

In Ephesians 5:21-33, husbands and wives are instructed as to their identity, roles, relationship, and responsibilities toward one another. In this context and within those thirteen verses the word “Christ” (Χριστός) and the word “church” (ἐκκλησία) each occur six times. It seems that no two words are more vital in a discussion of marriage than *Christ* and *church*. This would not be so in a secular discussion of marriage. In a secular context the most vital words might be *husband* and *wife*, or *communication* and *caring*, or *sharing* and *commitment*. While those are important aspects of marriage, and do merit recognition and much attention, they are not the beginning and end of the discussion on marriage. No, Christ and the church are that, which is why the name of the marriage retreat affiliated with this project—and emblazoned on the handbook—is, “Christ and the Church.” And the subtitle: “A Retreat Exploring the Biblical Doctrines of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, with a View to Life Application.” It is not a typical

name for a marriage retreat, even a Christian marriage retreat, however, it does bring the idea front-and-center that Christ and the church *are* what marriage is ultimately about. The purpose here is not to exegete this Ephesians passage (for that, see sermon 7 in appendix 15), but to put forth the above ideas. I wanted everyone to come out of this project knowing that all a godly husband does in a marriage says to the watching world, “This is what Jesus is like; this is how Jesus treats the church.” I wanted them to know that all a godly wife does in a marriage says, “How I treat my husband is how the church ought to treat Christ.”

### **Personal Reflections**

This project was beneficial to me, to my family, and to the churches. Since 1998 I have desired to fulfill my goal of completing a Doctor of Ministry degree program. I completed one D.Min. course and had attended the classes for the second course at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School when, for various reasons, I had to withdraw. Now, 17 years later and by God’s grace, this goal is being realized. Frankly, since I graduated from my M.Div. studies in 1994 I have not kept up diligently with studies in theology. I have had good and consistent devotional disciplines in Scripture each day, and I generally studied well for my sermons, but I did not do much other reading and study in theology. When I began this program at Southern Seminary I was challenged by the many thousands of pages of reading. I read and re-read the material, highlighting and annotating much of it. In fact, when I showed Dr. Vogel one of the books I had read and marked, he called mine the “super steroid method of reading!” The 20-plus book reviews and many other writing assignments prior to this project helped me to process my thoughts. These writings also provided ready references for training lay people, and for my own review. All of this has injected a noticeable confidence boost into my ministry. When I speak with congregants and with other pastors I now have the confidence of someone who has not been lazy, but has done his homework.

The connection with other pastors and professors at the modular seminars on

campus was also a huge blessing. Those men remain on my prayer list. A final personal benefit of the D.Min. program was that it forced me to develop habits of diligence. The final ten months of the program found me studying before 5:00 a.m. six days each week—except vacation weeks. It was that ten to twelve months, with the more rigorous program of study that I imposed on myself, that was the most satisfying and productive.

This program also benefitted my family. They have seen how seriously I take pastoral ministry. Instead of coasting toward retirement, or riding into the sunset of ministry at almost fifty years old, these have been years of additional, high-accountability, rigorous training. This has helped my own children—some past college, some still at home—to recognize the importance of studying hard and getting as much education as possible, as the Lord leads and provides the time, life-situation, and money to make it possible.

First Baptist and Big Spring Churches have benefitted from this program of study as well. Much of what I learned I was able to pass on to them. The overflow came out in sermons, Bible studies, prayers, counseling, personal conversations, writings, and in other ways. After reading and approving chapter 2 my faculty adviser, Dr. Plummer, said that the two churches just might know more about the biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage than any church in America. I hope that is the case, and that they put what they know into practice and teach what they learned to others, believers and unbelievers alike. I have exhorted the churches that the material they learned will be quickly forgotten if they do not develop—and I will help them with this—a systematic program of review. Apart from the project itself, the Applied Ministry Experience classes were especially designed to involve and impact the churches, so those were very beneficial also.

### **Implications for Further Study**

Now that a total of eight biblical texts have been studied in depth and preached, several things come to mind as possibilities for topics for future study. To

begin, a more intensive study of various key words in scripture related to marriage, divorce, and remarriage could be undertaken. That study could include their use in Jewish history, in the LXX, in classical Greek, in the first century, in early Christian literature, during the Middle Ages, during the Reformation, and up to the present time. Two such examples might be the meanings and uses of the words עֲרוֹת דְּבָרַי, “something indecent,” in Deuteronomy 24:1, or the word κεφαλή, “head,” in Ephesians 5:23. Other words with likewise disputed, contested, or ambiguous meanings could also be studied.

Another topic worthy of further study is that of training parents to train their children to practice a biblical doctrine of marriage. This project goes a long way toward understanding the doctrine, but does not attempt to deal with training parents to intentionally teach their children these truths from a young age. Of course, the parents’ example will be irreplaceable, but example alone will not be enough.

Other topics for further study might include practicing biblical principles in stepfamily relationships. The same biblical principles could and should be taught and applied in intact homes, but special circumstances arise in stepfamilies that could be addressed by this kind of study. Another worthy topic is whether Paul’s so-called “exception clause”—1 Corinthians 7:15, “But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace”—ever allows for divorce in the case of spousal abuse. And, just what does “not bound” mean? This latter point was addressed in chapter 2, and in sermon 5 (see appendix 15), but further study would be beneficial. Finally, the books by Jay Adams and Wayne House (see bibliography) are helpful and provide excellent material for further study. The former book comes from a reformed, Westminster perspective. The latter book provides space for four authors to present their varying views on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, with the other three writers responding. I have read both books with great profit.

## Conclusion

It has been a joy and a blessing to implement this project at First Baptist and Big Spring Churches. It was also a lot of work, not only for me, but also for my wife and for the congregations. Though it was a joy, I am also relieved that it is complete. And yet, though the project is done, *we* are not done! As mentioned, I have encouraged the churches in various ways to intentionally keep these truths on the “front burner,” for we will need them. We will need them in our own relationships, and in order to counsel others with God’s sure truth in the wilderness wasteland of the “living together” and “no-fault divorce” culture of America.

Marriage is beautiful, divorce is ugly, and remarriage is controversial. It is my prayer that God’s people will be joyfully submissive to His revealed Word, so that He is glorified in strong marriages that bear witness to marriage of Christ and the church.

One final story is fitting. During an exit interview a couple shared with me the story of her parents, Bob and Betty. Betty died last year at the age of seventy-one. She had an incapacitating disease since the age of forty-two. Bob took care of her at home for ten years. Then she went to live in a nursing home at age fifty-two, for nineteen years. Though Bob worked full-time for the majority of those years, he visited Betty every day, missing fewer than ten days in those nineteen years. And he did not just peek his head in the door. He came each night for two or three hours, talking with her and helping her get ready for bed. Some advised him to leave her, or to cheat on her. He would not. He would just go home, read his Bible, go to work, and come to see Betty again the next night, like clockwork. And, he brought her home each weekend.

This story was prompted by the very first question of their exit interview: “Thinking of the marriage you admire the most, what makes that marriage great?” They replied, “Dedication, commitment,” and then told me Bob and Betty’s story. May this project be for the glory of the Lord God, to help current and future marriages to have that kind of dedication and commitment. “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church” (Eph 5:32).

APPENDIX 1

SURVEY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD AND PRACTICE  
OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT TEACHINGS ON  
MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

Please respond to the following statements regarding *attitudes toward and practice of* Old and New Testament teachings on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Use the scale and write the number that best describes your perspective.

Identity Code: \_\_\_\_\_

---

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree

- \_\_\_\_ 1. The teachings of the Bible on family life are not very important in the decisions I make.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. I avoid looking to the Bible because I know it has commands I do not want to live by.
- \_\_\_\_ 3. If I wanted advice from God's Word on issues related to marriage, divorce, or remarriage, I would not know to which biblical books I should turn.
- \_\_\_\_ 4. If I needed marital help I would go to a secular counselor, not a biblical one.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. What Jesus taught about marital relationships is more important than what Paul taught.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. What the OT has to say about marriage is not needed since we have the NT.
- \_\_\_\_ 7. The Bible never permits divorce.
- \_\_\_\_ 8. The Bible permits divorce under certain circumstances, but not remarriage.
- \_\_\_\_ 9. People can see in me evidence that I rely on Scripture to direct me in family life issues.

- \_\_\_\_ 10. Biblical truths on family life are authoritative in my life, and I consciously apply them.
- \_\_\_\_ 11. The Bible gives specific roles to men and women in marriage, and those roles differ.
- \_\_\_\_ 12. The preaching, hearing, and applying of Spirit-filled sermons from Bible passages on marriage is the best way to improve my marriage.

## APPENDIX 2

### SURVEY OF KNOWLEDGE OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

Please take the following survey pertaining to *knowledge of* Old and New Testament teachings on marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

Identity Code: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **True or False**

- T F 1. The Bible teaches that the wife was created to be a helper to the husband and the husband was created to be a helper to the wife.
- T F 2. An Old Testament passage on marriage teaches that the husband should hold fast to his parents in order to properly honor them.
- T F 3. The Old Testament did not permit divorce for any reason.
- T F 4. According to the Old Testament, if a woman was divorced, then married another man and that second husband divorced her or died, she could then remarry her first husband if she followed certain conditions.
- T F 5. The Old Testament Book of Malachi addresses the topic of divorce.
- T F 6. The Old Testament regards divorce as an act of violence.
- T F 7. In the New Testament Jesus did not address the topic of divorce specifically.
- T F 8. Some of Jesus' teachings on divorce are in the context of being tested by a group of divorced people.
- T F 9. Jesus taught that it is better for some people not to get married.
- T F 10. The Apostle Paul taught that a Christian can divorce an unbeliever even if the unbeliever agrees to live with the believer.
- T F 11. Each of Paul's letters mentions either marriage, divorce, or remarriage.
- T F 12. The Old Testament book of Obadiah addresses divorce.
- T F 13. The Old Testament law said that Israel's kings could have multiple wives.
- T F 14. Biblically speaking, a never-married person could marry a widowed person.

- T F 15. Paul taught that undivided devotion to God is a good reason to stay single.
- T F 16. Paul taught that if an unbeliever leaves a believing spouse that the believer should let the unbeliever leave.
- T F 17. It is not a well-known doctrine, but the New Testament actually does allow polygamy (having more than one spouse at a time), though our government forbids it.

### Fill in the Blank

- 18-20. What three categories of unmarried people does Paul mention in one of his epistles?  
 \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_
21. Adam and Eve were naked but not \_\_\_\_\_.
22. An Old Testament prophet told men not to deal treacherously with the wife of their \_\_\_\_\_.
23. Jesus taught that Moses allowed divorce due to \_\_\_\_\_ hearts.
24. Who taught in the New Testament about being a eunuch for the sake of God's kingdom? \_\_\_\_\_.
25. Who was the human author of the divorce ruling in Deuteronomy 24?  
 \_\_\_\_\_.
26. Who was the human author of 1 Corinthians 7? \_\_\_\_\_.

### Multiple Choice

27. For how long after his wedding, a man was to be excused from military and other public service to be at home, making his wife happy?  
 A. Three months  
 B. Six months  
 C. One year  
 D. Two years  
 E. None of the above
28. Which book of the Bible says nothing about marriage or divorce?  
 A. Genesis  
 B. Deuteronomy  
 C. Malachi  
 D. Matthew  
 E. Philippians

29. Which Old Testament character pulled out the hair of his head and beard and tore his clothes over the mixed marriages of God's people with foreigners who worshiped other gods?
- A. Ezra
  - B. Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz
  - C. Elijah
  - D. Elisha
  - E. Malachi
30. Which Old Testament character rebuked, cursed, beat, and pulled out the hair of those who married worshipers of foreign gods?
- A. Elijah
  - B. Deborah
  - C. Moses
  - D. Nehemiah
  - E. None of the above

## APPENDIX 3

### POST-SERMON SERIES, POST-RETREAT GROUP INTERVIEW

1. From the standpoint of knowledge, attitudes, and practices, *what did you learn* during the ten-week sermon series from the Old and New Testaments on marriage, divorce, and remarriage?
2. Most sermon outlines, content, themes, and applications get lost from our memories over time, or put on the “back burner.” What are some *specific, practical ways we can keep these sermons on the “front burner”* in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and practices as a church? As individuals?
3. What are some *goals* we might begin to think about *in terms of practicing the biblical meaning and significance of marriage* (as individuals, as couples, and as a church)?
4. The New Testament uses many “one another” statements, such as, “outdo one another in showing honor” (Rom 12:10); “live in harmony with one another” (Rom 12:16); “through love serve one another” (Gal 5:13). In light of the sermons on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, *how might you live with your spouse (or future spouse) in an honoring, harmonious, “one another” manner?*
5. Again, striving to be specific and practical, *how can we bring the biblical perspective on marriage, divorce, and remarriage to the world of our neighbors*—a world so engulfed in godless relational remedies?
6. What are some areas in which couples commonly struggle? *What knowledge, attitudes, and practices from the sermon series would be helpful in addressing those marital struggles?*
7. *How* are the sermons in this series *relevant to those who have never been married or who are single again?*

## APPENDIX 4

### POST-RETREAT INDIVIDUAL EXIT INTERVIEW

1. Thinking of the marriage you admire the most, what makes that marriage great?
2. What is the most important thing you have learned during this fifteen week project?
3. What is the most important thing you need to do as a result of this project?
4. How can you use what you have learned to better serve and glorify the Lord God?
5. How can you use what you have learned to better serve your spouse (or future spouse)?
6. How can you use what you learned to better love and serve the church?
7. How can you use what you have learned to better love and serve your neighbor?
8. What correlations can be made between marriage, divorce, and remarriage and my relationship and/or fellowship with the Lord?
9. How could the sermon series and retreat have been better? What suggestions do you have for improvement?

APPENDIX 5

SURVEY OF PASTOR-THEOLOGIANS TO MEASURE  
ACCURACY OF THE DOCTRINE OF MARRIAGE,  
DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE PRESENTED  
IN PROJECT SERMONS

Sermon under review (circle one): Gen 2:18-25      Deut 24:1-4      Mal 2:10-16  
Matt 19:3-12      1 Cor 7:1-24      1 Cor 7:25-40      Col 3:18-4:1      Eph 5:21-6:9

*Please read all seven statements before responding.* Write on the back if you need more space.

1. The theology in the sermon is biblically correct.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree A	Agree Somewhat AS	Strongly Agree SA
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Examples or Comments:

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2. The sermon includes relevant practical applications that are true to the scriptural text.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree A	Agree Somewhat AS	Strongly Agree SA
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Examples or Comments:

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3. The theme (The Big Idea or Sermon-in-a-Sentence), found in the sermon's conclusion, is true to the text of scripture.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree A	Agree Somewhat AS	Strongly Agree SA
----------------------------	---------------	----------------------------	------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Examples or Comments:

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4. The main points of the sermon (listed in the extended outline under point II. A., B., C., etc.) are true to the text of scripture.

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree A	Agree Somewhat AS	Strongly Agree SA
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Examples or Comments:

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5. General comments about the accuracy of the doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage as drawn from the sermon reviewed:

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6. If not already covered above, what points in this sermon did you find to be biblically incorrect? Please indicate the specific verse, why you disagree, what teaching should replace it, and any resources referenced.

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7. The sermons present a comprehensive, biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage—no important points were left out. (*Skip if you did not review all eight sermons.*)

Strongly Disagree SD	Disagree D	Disagree Somewhat DS	Agree A	Agree Somewhat AS	Strongly Agree SA
----------------------------	---------------	----------------------------	------------	-------------------------	-------------------------

Examples or Comments:

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Name  
(optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school or seminary (optional):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Highest degree earned (M.A., M.Div., Th.M., D.Min., Ph.D., etc.):  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX 6  
ENLISTMENT LETTER

Dear Friends,

In the summer and fall of 2014 I will be implementing a ministry project at First Baptist Church of Reedsburg and Big Spring Church of Wisconsin Dells. This letter is an invitation for you to participate in this project. The final product will be submitted to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The project title is, "Preaching a Biblical Doctrine of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage." The purpose is to explain and apply, through expository preaching, what the Bible says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

The first goal of this project will be to evaluate the participants' biblical *knowledge, attitudes, and practice* of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This goal will be measured by means of two anonymous surveys given to all participants in the project. The first survey will measure biblical *knowledge* and the second survey will measure *attitudes and practices* related to marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The surveys will each be taken before the project begins and again after it is completed in order to measure the change in knowledge, attitude, and practice.

The second goal of this project will be for the pastor to develop a biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage by studying Old and New Testament passages with a view to preaching and teaching those passages. The preaching will involve a series of ten sermons; the teaching will involve the development of a handbook that includes eight lessons. This goal will be measured by a survey given to theologically trained peers who have read the sermon manuscripts. In this manner their input will be sought as to the accuracy of the theological interpretations and applications made in the sermon series.

The third goal of this project will be to equip participants by preaching the series of ten sermons, explaining and applying the biblical teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This goal will be measured by a group interview given to project participants. At the group interview one individual and one group application from each sermon will be sought.

The fourth goal of this project will be to further equip participants by teaching the handbook of eight lessons to reinforce and strengthen the biblical knowledge, attitude, and practice of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This handbook will comprise the content of a weekend retreat; it could also be worked through independently. This goal will be measured by means of individual exit interviews with participants. This goal will be deemed successfully met if in each individual participant's handbook there is an action plan in place to practice at least one key behavior from each sermon and from each lesson.

Regarding expectations of project participants, you will be asked to commit to (1) attendance at a minimum eight of the ten sermons preached. If you miss a sermon, a recording or expanded outline will be provided; (2) involvement in the two surveys and two interviews mentioned above; (3) participation in the weekend retreat, also mentioned above. More expectations are described in the attached commitment form.

I am putting forth my most diligent effort in making this project a benefit to you. I would be honored to have your diligent, hearty participation. Please fill out and return the attached commitment form if you want to participate. Couples should respond each on their own separate form. If only one spouse wants to participate, that is acceptable. An initial meeting will be held (date to be announced) to further explain the project and take the pre-project surveys. That meeting will provide the opportunity for you to ask questions. If you have questions before that meeting, please contact me in person, by phone, text message, or e-mail.

May the Lord bless you. Thank you for considering participation in this endeavor. "To Him be the glory in the church" (Eph 3:21)!

In Christ,

Pastor Bob Brandhagen

APPENDIX 7

COMMITMENT FORM

I am willing and able to participate in the project, "Preaching a Biblical Doctrine of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage at First Baptist Church of Reedsburg and Big Spring Church of Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin." I understand that the project will last sixteen weeks and that I will be committed to (1) attendance at eight of ten sermons; (2) getting the outline or audio for the two sermons that I may miss; (3) taking two surveys both before and after the project; (4) participating in one group interview and one individual (or couples) interview; (5) attending a weekend retreat; (6) willing, accurate, unbiased, and diligent participation for the full sixteen weeks; and (7) praying and working to keep the truths learned from being forgotten and ignored.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

(After your commitment form has been received, you will be informed as to the date and location of the initial meeting.)

APPENDIX 8  
INITIAL MEETING LETTER

Thursday, July 17, 2014

Dear Marriage Project Participants,

Thank you for being willing to be a part of the project, “Preaching a Biblical Doctrine of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.” As a reminder from the commitment form that you signed:

“I understand that the project will last sixteen weeks and that I will be committed to (1) attendance at eight of ten sermons; (2) getting the outline or audio for the two sermons that I may miss; (3) taking two surveys both before and after the project; (4) participating in one group interview and one individual (or couples) interview; (5) attending a weekend retreat; (6) willing, accurate, unbiased, and diligent participation for the full sixteen weeks; and (7) praying and working to keep the truths learned from being forgotten and ignored.”

As was explained in the enlistment letter, there will be an initial meeting to further explain the project, answer questions, and take the pre-project surveys. That meeting will be held at Pastor Bob and Lisa’s house on *Friday, August 15* at 6:00 p.m. There will be a potluck meal, so please bring an entrée, salad, or dessert. After the meal we will have a time for prayer, questions, and then the surveys.

Please R. S. V. P. Also, keep in mind other important dates:

*Sunday, September 15*—Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage sermon series begins. For those sermons that you may miss, please go to [www.reedsburgfirstbaptist.net](http://www.reedsburgfirstbaptist.net) for the outline and audio of the sermon. The series will continue for the ten weeks, except for October 12 when I will be on a mission trip.

*Friday, December 5 through Sunday, December 7—Marriage Retreat at Living Waters Bible Camp in Westby, Wisconsin. The cost is \$100 per person which includes two nights' stay, five meals, and use of the meeting facilities. More details will follow.*

Please pray for yourself and the others involved in this project. Call me if you need clarification on any point in this letter. Thank you.

In Christ,

Pastor Bob Brandhagen

P. S. Please carefully read the following statement, which is to precede your taking of the surveys, and which is required by the seminary as part of its risk assessment ethics protocol:

### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to analyze your knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage by means of various surveys and interviews. This research is being conducted by Robert Brandhagen for purposes of a project to be presented to the faculty of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In this research, you will be asked to (1) take two surveys before the project begins and the same two surveys after the project is completed; (2) listen to ten sermons and utilize a handbook; and (3) participate in a group interview and in an exit interview. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

APPENDIX 9

MARRIAGE RETREAT WEEKEND AGENDA: LIVING  
WATERS BIBLE CAMP, WESTBY, WISCONSIN  
DECEMBER 5-7, 2014

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Event</u>
<b>Friday, December 5</b>	
5:00-7:00	Arrival (No meal will be served; please eat before you arrive.)
7:00	Welcome prayer to dedicate the retreat to the Lord, announcements, and answering questions
7:20	Time of singing
7:30	Session One
<b>Saturday, December 6</b>	
8:00	Breakfast
8:30	Time of singing
8:40	Session Two
10:00	Break
10:20	Session Three
Noon	Lunch
1:00	Free time
3:30	Session Four
5:30	Dinner
6:30	Singing
6:40	Session Five
8:00	Free time

**Sunday, December 7**

8:00	Breakfast
8:30	Worship service (singing, prayer, scripture reading)
9:30	Break
9:45	Session Six
11:00	Group interview; distribute post-test of surveys to be returned within one week
11:30	Pack and prepare to depart
Noon	Lunch
1:30	Departure

APPENDIX 10  
FIELD TEST COVER LETTER

Friday, May 30, A. D. 2014

Dear Friends,

In the summer and fall of 2014 I will be implementing a ministry project at First Baptist Church of Reedsburg and Big Spring Church of Wisconsin Dells. This letter is a request and invitation for you to participate in this project by helping to field-test two of the surveys that will be used in the project. The final product will be submitted to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The project title is, “Preaching a Biblical Doctrine of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.” The purpose is to explain and apply, through expository preaching, what the Bible says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

As one doing a field-test, you need not identify yourself; just ignore the Identity Code blank. Please fill out both surveys, then give suggestions for improvement. You might suggest deleting or re-wording one of the questions or statements, or adding a completely new question. You might state your general impressions of the survey. Feel free to give the reasons for your suggestions. Please indicate your suggestions in red ink, directly on the surveys that you have filled out. Then return the surveys in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. Your input will help make the surveys the best research instruments possible.

Do not worry if you do not know the correct answers to some of the questions. You may even choose not to answer some (or any) of the questions and just give your suggestions instead. It is preferable, however, for you to fill out the surveys in full. Remember, it is anonymous, and I am *not looking for your answers* to the survey

questions, as much as your suggestions and *impressions about* the surveys. If you have questions you may call or text message me at 608-434-5678, or e-mail me at xxxxxxxxxxxx@ymail.com. Thank you for your assistance in this project.

In Christ,

Bob Brandhagen

P. S. If possible, please return the surveys and your suggested improvements within one week. Thank you.

## APPENDIX 11

### GROUP INTERVIEW RESPONSES

1. **From the standpoint of knowledge, attitudes, and practices, what did you learn during the ten-week sermon series and retreat?**

The sermon series and retreat were a reminder of things once known but forgotten. One moved from a belief that divorce is never permissible to a new understanding that divorce can sometimes be allowed by God. Peace was found by one whose unbelieving spouse had left (1 Cor 7:15), having formerly wondered if it had been wrong to allow the unbeliever to leave. Others are now aware of the many places in the Bible that touch on marriage, divorce, and/or remarriage. Also, we learned that God created marriage, in part, because He seeks to produce “godly offspring” (Mal 2:15).

2. **What are some specific, practical ways we can keep these sermons on the “front burner” in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and practices?**

Suggestions included doing an overview of the sermon series twice per year, and making it available to others, as well as developing the marriage covenant discussed at the retreat, with occasional reading of the covenant in worship services. Review of the retreat handbook individually, and as couples, will also be helpful.

3. **What are some goals we might begin to think about in terms of practicing the biblical meaning and significance of marriage (as individuals, as couples, and as a church)?**

The people suggested more frequent sermons on marriage relationships, with many practical examples to aid in application of what was learned. More frequent retreats will help to go deeper with one another and in Christ.

4. **In light of the sermons (and sermon-based retreat) on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, how might you live with your spouse (or future spouse) in an honoring, harmonious, “one another” manner?**

Respondents indicated that prayer is huge in this undertaking, that we are wise

to put expectations on God (with not too many expectations on one's spouse), that we must work on communication with one another, that we must clarify rather than assume what our spouses need or want, and that we must look at the blessings within trials in marriage.

5. **Striving to be specific and practical, how can we bring the biblical perspective on marriage, divorce, and remarriage to the world of our neighbors—a world so engulfed in godless relational remedies?**

We can demonstrate the Romans 12 concept of outdoing one another, then bearing fruit, being the example, being informed about what the Bible teaches, and teaching others.

6. **What are some areas in which couple commonly struggle? What knowledge, attitudes, and practices from the sermon series would be helpful in addressing those marital struggles?**

Remember the “Umbrella Principle” (Eph 5:21) about how families are to be structured by God's design for husband-wife roles. Also, listen well and understand, respect the differences between the sexes, and strive for excellent communication.

7. **How are the sermons in this series relevant to those who have never been married or who are single again?**

One suggested from personal experience that singles can be encouraged as to the power and beauty of waiting on God. Further, as the husband-and-wife relationship parallels the Christ-and-church relationship, principles for husbands and wives are applicable and transferrable also to a single person's relationship with the Lord. Also, if one did it wrong the first time, he or she can do it right the next time. We are wise to think long and hard about what we did wrong in former marriages so that the same errors and sins are not repeated in a future marriage.

## APPENDIX 12

### SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

The Book of Ruth is named for its heroine, a woman whose devotion to God and love for family is seen throughout the book. Ruth tells how God graciously rewarded the faithfulness of the widows Ruth and Naomi by delivering them through their kinsman-redeemer Boaz, who married Ruth and maintained the property of Naomi's family. The story takes place during the time of the judges (about 1150 B. C.).

In the Hebrew Bible, Ruth appears in the third section of books known as the *Hagiographa* or "Writings." The Jews read Ruth at the Feast of Weeks (also known as Pentecost or Harvest). The authorship of Ruth is not known; it is named for its chief character, not necessarily for its author. Jewish tradition credits the book to Samuel.

Faithfulness—both human and divine—is a key theme in Ruth. Naomi demonstrated faithfulness by returning to the promised land. Ruth demonstrated faithfulness by accompanying Naomi to Bethlehem and gleaning to provide for her. Ruth further demonstrated faithfulness to her deceased husband by her desire to marry into his family. Boaz demonstrated faithfulness by fulfilling his covenant role as kinsman. More than that, Ruth is a story of the Lord God's faithfulness. God was faithful in preserving a family line, which led to King David, and ultimately to Jesus. Ruth's story serves as a reminder that the faithful God uses our faithfulness in the fulfillment of His promises.

Regarding Ruth's purpose and theology, the story provides a bridge from the patriarchs to the monarchy. The genealogy at the end of the book traces the lineage of Boaz from Perez, the son of Judah, down to King David. For many Israelites the most important word of the book was the last—*David*.

Ruth shows how God sovereignly achieves His purposes through the

faithfulness of His people. The book speaks about God indirectly through the prayers and blessings of the story's characters, and reflects a belief in God's lordship over history, while also indicating that human decisions and actions play a significant role also. Ruth teaches that God's will is sometimes accomplished by common people with uncommon faith. No miracles or prophecies are recoded; it does not mention the institutions of Israel's religion, such as the tabernacle. We see people going about everyday affairs.

The theological emphasis of Ruth can be summed up by two key words—*kindness* (רַחֲמִים) and *kinsman-redeemer* (גֹּאֲלֵי). The word *kindness* indicates covenant faithfulness and occurs three times in the prayers and commendations spoken by the characters (1:8; 2:20; 3:10). There is an implied contrast between the story's characters, who are righteous, and those of Judges, who “did as he [they] saw fit” (Judg. 21:25).

Ruth teaches that God rewards the faithfulness of His people. God accomplished this by using Boaz as the family's “kinsman-redeemer” (2:20; 3:12–13; 4:1–10). The kinsman-redeemer was a relative who helped a troubled family member so that the family was not dispossessed of land or left without an heir (Lev. 25:25–34; Deut. 25:5–10). The story corrected the Jews when they viewed the worship of the Lord God exclusively for Israel. Although Ruth was a Moabitess, she too was blessed by God.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>David S. Dockery, ed., *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (Nashville: B & H, 1998; Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), n.p.

APPENDIX 13  
PASTOR-THEOLOGIAN SERMON REVIEW  
COVER LETTER

Tuesday, July 15, A. D. 2014

Dear Brother,

In the summer and fall of 2014 I will be implementing a ministry project at First Baptist Church of Reedsburg and Big Spring Congregational Church of Wisconsin Dells. This letter is a request and invitation for you to participate in this project by engaging in a peer review of the sermons. The project title is, “Preaching a Biblical Doctrine of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.” The purpose is to explain and apply, through expository preaching, what the Bible says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The final product will be presented to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

In the project I state that one goal is for “the pastor-researcher to develop a biblical doctrine of marriage, divorce, and remarriage by studying Old and New Testament passages with a view to preaching and teaching those passages. This goal will be measured by a survey . . . given to theologically trained peers, pastors, and theologians who have read the sermon manuscripts (or extended outlines). In this manner their input will be sought as to the accuracy of the theological interpretations and applications made in the sermon series. . . . The results of the reviewers’ input will be used as a measurement of this goal.” In fact, I go on to promise “that the only content included in this project will be sermon content . . . that has been reviewed by theologically trained reviewers for accuracy, relevance, and excellence. Excluded will be sermon content . . . that has not been thus reviewed.”

A total of eight reviewers are being sought, and there are eight sermons to be

reviewed. In the Sermon Reviewer Response Form there will be a place for you to decline participation or to indicate willingness to participate. On that response form you will also be able to indicate how many sermons you wish to review. You may choose to review one sermon or all eight. If eight pastors choose to review two sermons each, I will have sixteen reviews. Since I am asking you to look carefully at the text of scripture alongside the corresponding sermon manuscript and/or outline, it would probably be too much for you to agree to review all eight sermons. If you have the time and the desire and you want to review all eight sermons, please indicate that.

As you review the sermons according to the survey provided, you will note that each question asks you to evaluate *the theology* behind a given part of the sermon. I am not asking you to evaluate the grammar, style, or illustrations, but *just the theology* (and applications) of the sermon.

Please fill out the Sermon Reviewer Response Form and send it back in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. Even if you decline participation it would be helpful if you would send the form back to me. I am enclosing one sample Survey of Pastor-Theologians so you can see the research instrument in advance. If you choose to participate, I will send to you the sermon manuscript(s) and/or extended outline(s) that correspond to those you have indicated, along with extra surveys as needed.

It means a lot that you would put forth such effort as I am requesting. I understand you are very busy and may not be able to be a part of this endeavor. Thanks for reading this, and God bless you.

In Christ,

Bob Brandhagen

APPENDIX 14

PASTOR-THEOLOGIAN SERMON REVIEWER  
RESPONSE FORM

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. I will participate in the sermon reviews. Yes (circle one) No (If no, stop here.)

3. I will review (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 sermon(s).

4. I would like to review the following sermon(s) (circle all that apply):

Gen 2:18-25      Deut 24:1-4      Mal 2:10-16      Matt 19:3-12

1 Cor 7:1-24      1 Cor 7:25-40      Col 3:18-4:1      Eph 5:21-6:9

5. Name of theological school(s) attended (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Degrees earned: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 15

### EXTENDED SERMON OUTLINES

The content of the sermons *as preached* contains biblical and theological information about the sermon text from chapter 2. That information is not included in the sermon outlines published here in order to avoid unnecessary repetition and added length to the project.

## Sermon 1

### “GOD’S PERSPECTIVE AND PROCEDURE FOR MARRIAGE”

TEXT: Genesis 2:18-25

DATE: September 21, 2014

#### I. Introduction

##### A. Preview of Series

##### B. Bridge to Sermon 1

1. Loneliness does not just go away; it must be chased away.<sup>1</sup>
2. Suggestions for chasing away loneliness: hobby, volunteer, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Problem: Adam was alone (“not good,” 2:18). Solution: God removed Adam’s rib *from* his side; reformed into a woman to stand *by* his side.

##### C. Sermon Purpose: To give God’s perspective; to raise man’s problem and God’s solution; to teach proper procedure: leave, cleave, one flesh.

#### II. Main and Sub-points

##### A. Our Problem is Seen from God’s Perspective

1. “It is not good” (2:18).
  - a. This is the Lord’s assessment, not man’s; carries fullest authority.
  - b. Isolation is bad. Babies fail to thrive if isolated. Solitaire.
  - c. What is it about being alone that is “not good”?
  - d. Context: “good” is used six times in Gen 1; pattern is broken by a “very good” (crescendo, Gen 1:31) and “not good” (disapproval, 2:18).
  - e. “Not good” is preceded by the command to be fruitful, increase, fill, subdue, and rule (Gen 1:28), and by God hiring Adam for his first job in the Garden (Gen 2:15), and by the prohibition (“you must not eat from the tree . . . you will certainly die” (Gen 2:17). *Then*, immediately after the prohibition, we are told it was not good for Adam to be alone.
2. “For the man to be alone” (2:18).
  - a. Fact: Adam could not even *begin* to do God’s will if alone. He could not keep even the first command (“be fruitful,” Gen 1:22, 28), without Eve.
  - b. Today being alone is still not good. If marriage is God’s will for a couple, they cannot do what God would have them do if they stay single. But, God gifts some to remain single (Matt 19:10 12; 1 Cor 7).
  - c. What kind of trouble when alone? Warning (Gal 5:13).
  - d. Takes real (godly) man to flee for life from sin (Gen 39; 1 Tim 6:11).
  - e. Sin does not just happen, out of the blue as we are keeping in step with Spirit (Gal 5:25). We are active in it. 1 Cor 15:33. Man Cave danger.

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<sup>1</sup>Kay Whittenhauer, “Ten Things to Do When You’re Lonely,” accessed December 25, 2013, <http://voices.yahoo.com/10-things-re-lonely-1590183.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

- f. Transition: That is our problem as seen from God’s view. How solved?
- B. God’s Solution to Our Problem is Seen in God’s Procedure
1. “I will make a helper suitable for him” (2:18b).
    - a. Hebrew: עֲזָרָה means to help or succor.<sup>3</sup>
    - b. Greek (LXX): βοηθὸν means supporter, assistant, patron.<sup>4</sup>
    - c. Heb 13:6 uses the same word as in the LXX: “Lord is my helper.”
    - d. Helper seen as immature person; that is not the biblical sense. God is our helper; it is in God’s nature to help us, and we need His help.
  2. “God had formed out of the ground all the . . . animals . . . birds” (2:19).
    - a. Hebrew: יָצַר means form or fashion as a potter with clay (2:7, 8).
    - b. Greek (LXX): πλάσσω means form, fashion, make, mold.
  3. “He brought them to the man . . . so the man gave names” (2:19-20).
    - a. Gen 6:19—God said to Noah, “You are to bring into the ark” animals.
    - b. King Phillip Cried, “O, For Goodness Sakes, Verona”? No, “whatever.”
    - c. Privilege of naming: Zechariah (Luke 1:63); angel (Luke 2:21).
    - d. Blackaby/King: join God, He usually involves people (see Amos 3:7).
  4. “But for Adam no suitable helper was found” (2:20).
    - a. No animal can help man be fruitful, multiply, fill, subdue, rule.
    - b. Man’s best friend can be a guide dog, watch dog, not a suitable helper.
    - c. We often forget our God-given tasks, and the help God provides.
  5. “God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep” (2:21).
    - a. Other times God puts people to sleep (15:12; 28:11).
    - b. Purpose not anesthetic, but passivity, acceptance of God’s provision.
  6. “Took one of the man’s ribs . . . made a woman . . . brought her” (2:21-22).
    - a. Hebrew: בָּנָה means build.
    - b. Greek (LXX): οἰκοδομέω means build (up), strengthen (Acts 9:31).
    - c. Eve was built up by God for Adam, so church built up by God for God.
  7. “This is now bone of my bones . . . she shall be called ‘Woman’” (Gen 2:23).

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<sup>3</sup>Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979). The electronic edition is alternately titled *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This citation also applies to all subsequent Hebrew definitions in this sermon outline.

<sup>4</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This citation also applies to all subsequent Septuagint (LXX) definitions in this sermon outline.

- a. She is made of the same stuff: bone of Adam’s bone.
  - b. She is different: not another Man, but Woman.
8. “Man leaves his father and mother . . . united to his wife . . . one flesh” (2:24).
- a. Hebrew: **נָטַח** means forsake, loose.
  - b. Greek (LXX): **καταλείπω** means depart with finality, not abandonment but limitation. Create space. No longer honor/obey, just honor parents. Wife is priority, nothing can come between.
  - c. Hebrew: **קָבַץ** means cling, cleave.
  - d. Greek (LXX): **προσκολλάω** means adhere closely, faithfully devoted.
9. “Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Gen 2:25).
- a. World premiere of marriage is bliss, paradise, and innocence.
  - b. Glimpse of what life was like without sin—idyllic.
  - c. In the next verse, Gen 3:1, all that would begin to end.
  - d. Enter shame and guilt; fig leaves (3:7), homespun, pathetic, inadequate.
  - e. God shed blood innocent animal to cover guilty couple (3:21): Jesus.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Aloneness does not just go away; it must be chased away.
- B. God chased Adam’s aloneness away in Gen 2:18-25.
- C. The Big Story: The creation ordinance (“it is not good for man to be alone”) made its way through history to set in place how families are to operate today.
- D. The Sermon-in-a-Sentence: “Marriage (to a woman) is God’s plan to solve the aloneness of man.”
- E. The Big Question: Will you submit to, promote, and enjoy God’s provision for loneliness, instead of man-made remedies?

## Sermon 2

### “A REMARRIAGE RED LIGHT”

TEXT: Deuteronomy 24:1-5

DATE: September 28, 2014

#### I. Introduction

A. Review of Sermons Preached

B. Bridge to Sermon 2

1. Ping pong or foosball. Focus on the ball, kicked or paddled back/forth.
2. Woman in Deut 24 is like ball; God via Moses writes to prevent that.

C. Sermon Purpose: To address a specific situation in which a woman is married,

divorced, remarried, then loses the second husband through divorce or death, and is prohibited from remarrying the first husband; to show that neglect of this command has covenantal significance, as sin is thus brought on the land of inheritance.

#### II. Main and Sub-Points

A. Husband Divorces His Wife Due to Displeasure and Indecency

1. “If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him” (24:1).

a. χάριτιν (LXX): not find kindness, good will.<sup>1</sup>

b. לֹא יִתְּתֶנּוּ אֵלָיו חֵן וְחֶסֶד: not attain or find favor or grace.<sup>2</sup>

c. Husband, the one person from whom wife should be able to find grace, will *not* supply it.

d. As we will see, this may or may not be her own fault.

e. She may have provoked this reaction from her husband, or not.

f. In any case, it is a sad state of affairs.

g. If couples communicate, date, meditate on Scripture, laugh, are in Christ, Spirit-filled, then unlikely to *displease* each other.

h. Rom 12:10; Phil 2:3-4.

i. Hard be *displeased* with other when you honor other above self.

2. “Because he finds something indecent about her. . .” (24:1).

a. ἄσχημον (LXX): “unattractive, unseemly, ugly, unpresentable.”

b. 1 Cor 12:23. Unpresentable parts (ἀσχήμονα) special modesty.

c. עָרְוָה: “nakedness, (genitalia), shameful exposure . . . indecency, improper behavior.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This information also pertains to all subsequent definitions of LXX words, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979). The electronic edition is alternately titled *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This information also pertains to all subsequent definitions of Hebrew words, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

- d. Expanded meaning of עֲרוּת can be found below.<sup>4</sup>
- e. This word is used three times in Gen 9:22-23.
- f. American culture no *unpresentable* parts of the human body; far from “special modesty,” centerfolds, center stage in movies.
- 3. “And he writes her a certificate of divorce . . .” (24:1).
  - a. Serving divorce papers more common than sending love letters?
  - b. Hallmark: Of all people on whole planet, you are my favorite.
  - c. Divorce papers contrast: “This is an action for divorce. . . .”
  - d. Sad world of difference—genre greeting card vs. divorce decree.
  - e. Certif. of divorce, Isa 50:1; Jer 3:8; Matt 5:31; 19:7; Mark 10:4.
- 4. “Gives it to her and sends her from his house. . .” (24:1).
  - a. Courts in U. S. A. judge decides which spouse stays in house.
  - b. This would devastate the woman in every way.
  - c. Transition: After her divorce, a woman might not stay single.
- B. Woman Marries a Second Husband
  - 1. “If . . . she leaves. . . (24:2).
    - a. She is not leaving because she wants to leave.
    - b. She has no choice in the matter.
  - 2. “She becomes the wife of another man. . .” (24:2).
    - a. Many states in U. S. have six month waiting period after the divorce is finalized before a divorced person may remarry.
    - b. Text does not say anything about whether children involved.
    - c. Children are not Moses’ focus in this passage.
    - d. Child may be glad or angry to have step-parent.
    - e. It may be a good thing or a bad thing for the children.
    - f. Messy situation may get better or worse with stepfamily.
    - g. See project Chapter 3 where step-family issues are addressed.
    - h. Transition: After second marriage, she might not stay married.
- C. Second Husband Divorces His Wife Due to Dislike, Or Dies
  - 1. “Second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house” (24:3).

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<sup>4</sup>R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 1. “To lay bare, uncover, expose nakedness,” and (2) to lay bare in the sense “to empty, to pour out. . . . After the fall (or “plunge”) of man, nakedness in the OT was a matter of shame. This is not because sex is evil, but because of sin-burdened minds. See J. Barton Payne, *Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 218. As Derek Kidner writes, “Man saw the familiar world and spoilt it now in the seeing, projecting evil on the innocence (cf. Titus1:15) and reacting to the good with shame and flight. . . . The fig leaves were pathetic enough, as human expedients tend to be, but the instinct was sound and God confirmed it, for sin’s proper fruit is shame. The couple, now ill at ease together, expressed a foretaste of fallen human relations in general.” Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 1 (London: Tyndale, 1967), 69). Hence, nakedness in the OT after Gen 3:7 is a symbol of human shame, the evil fruit of sin. It is quite impossible to build a case biblically for nudity. Nakedness cannot be tolerated outside proper sexual relationships (see the prohibitions of incest in Lev 18 and 20), nor may it occur in worship (Ex 20:26; cf. 28:42). Conversely, nakedness, the exposure of shame, is a marked feature of judgment on evildoers (see Isa 3:17; Hab 3:13; Zeph 2:14 Lam 4:21; and the extensive employment of the vocabulary for nakedness by Ezek in chapters 16, 22, 23). In Ps 137:7 Edom’s taunt of Jerusalem is an example of paronomasia. Edom’s words, “raze it, raze it, down to its foundations,” by double entendre signify, “strip her, strip her, down to her buttocks” Jerusalem is thus pictured as a woman being ravaged. See Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III*, Anchor Bible Commentaries, vol. 17 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 273.

- a. Whereas first husband divorced her due to indecency or unseemliness, second husband divorces her due to a dislike.
  - b. נִשְׂטָה: “expresses an emotional attitude toward persons and things which are opposed, detested, despised and with which one wishes to have no contact or relationship. It is therefore the opposite of love. Whereas love draws and unites, hate separates and keeps distant. The hated and hating persons are considered foes or enemies and are considered odious, utterly unappealing.”<sup>5</sup> This is the word “dislike” (NIV).
  - c. Illustration: A woman wrote with soap on the bathroom mirror, “Herb, I hate you. Love, Marge.” But in 24:3 he (hates) her.
2. “or if he dies” (24:3).
- a. Rule of 24:4 true for either divorce or death of second husband.
  - b. See Rom 7:1-6 which bears on the present passage.
  - c. Transition: After her second husband disappears, can a woman go back to the first husband?
- D. First Husband May Not Marry His Former Wife Again
1. “Then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled” (24:4).
    - a. μιανθῆναι (LXX): defiled morally or ritually.
    - b. נִשְׂטָה: ceremonially unclean; defiled sexually.
    - c. In the NT this word is used in John 18:28 (the Jews did not enter Caiaphas’ palace to avoid “ceremonial uncleanness”).
    - d. In the NT this word is used in Titus 1:15 (of unbelievers who are “corrupted” in mind and conscience).
    - e. In the NT this word is used in Hebrews 12:15 (a bitter root may “defile many”).
    - f. In the NT this word is used in Jude 8 (ungodly “pollute” bodies).
  2. “That would be detestable” (24:4).
    - a. βδέλυγμά (LXX): “detestable . . . horrible thing which defiles.”
    - b. תּוֹעֵבָה: abomination; also in Mal 2:11.
  3. “In the eyes of the LORD” (24:4).
    - a. If detestable in God’s eyes, we must also detest it; this is a test.
    - b. God “observes everyone . . . his eyes examine them” (Psa 11:4).
    - c. “The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous” (Psa 35:15a).
  4. “Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance” (24:4).
    - a. On “the land,” see Gen 12:1-3, the Abrahamic Covenant.
    - b. Sin in marriage, as described in 24:1-4, brings sin and defilement on the pure land that God gifted to His people as an inheritance.
    - c. On polluting “the land,” see Numbers 35:33-34.
    - d. On intermarriage in “a land polluted,” see Ezra 9:1-4, 10-15.
    - e. Israel intermarried with nations, idolatry. Disobeyed God.
    - f. Transition: Do not remarry your first (or former) spouse if he/she married another; do not be too busy your first year of marriage.
- E. Newly Married Man Gets a Year Off Duty to Make His Wife Happy
1. “If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home” (24:5).
    - a. Husband (couple) eliminate anything extraneous during first year of marriage. Distractions minimal. Hobbies, man-cave

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<sup>5</sup>Harris, et al., *Theological Wordbook*, s.v.

- seclusion, overtime kept to a minimum.
- b. Husband's place is in the home, especially first year of marriage.
- 2. "And bring happiness to the wife he has married" (24:5).
  - a. Prov 5:18b—"may you rejoice in the wife of your youth."
  - b. 1 Chron 16:43b—"David returned home to bless his family."
  - c. Goal: make wife happy; wife's goal: make husband happy.
  - d. Simple recipe: find out what makes spouse happy, then do it!
  - e. If he does not make it his priority in year one to intentionally make wife happy, then less likely to have a happy wife.
  - f. Unattended, such a situation can descend to bitterness, sin.
  - g. Then, when almost too late, losing his marriage, asks, "What can I do to make you happy?" By then she may hate him, and if she replies at all, she may only growl back, "You should know," and obviously, he doesn't. And so it goes.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Watching your marriage, can one conclude *not* that your spouse is the ball in a foosball match, but rather a player on your side of the table?
- B. The Big Story: In the happy account of Genesis 2, God made a married couple naked and unashamed, but sin entered so that in Deut 24:1-4 a marriage involves nakedness and shame. Immediately, in Deut 24:5, we have the beginnings of a solution, so that any marriage under God's covenant can come back to Gen 2-style, Song of Solomon-style, Proverbs 31-style, John 2-style, Ephesians 5-style joy.
- C. The Sermon-in-a-Sentence—Moses brings God's perspective on starting and stopping marriages and remarriages.
- D. The Big Question—Will you pray and work, in the sight of God, to get rid of anything that is indecent, that God could dislike, or that is detestable, defiled, or displeasing in your relationship with your spouse and your God?

## Sermon 3

“BE ON YOUR GUARD!”

TEXT: Malachi 2:10-16

DATE: October 5, 2014

### I. Introduction

A. Review of Sermons Preached

B. Bridge to Sermon 2

1. Comedian Brian Regan musing about politicians saying to reporters, “Not taking questions,” wishing he knew that trick in school.

2. Mal 2:10-16, prophet asks five questions which God’s people must answer.

C. Sermon Purpose: To know God’s mind and command regarding marital unfaithfulness and divorce, and the impact of those on covenant and worship.

### II. Main and Sub-points

A. Interrogation: Answer Questions About Father, Creation, and Spiritual Plunge

1. “Do we not all have one Father” (2:10)?

a. Hebrew: אֱלֹהִים means “God . . . who constituted, controls, guides and watches over it” (BDB).<sup>1</sup>

b. Greek (LXX): πατήρ means “authority and care for his people.”<sup>2</sup>

c. See Psa 27:10, 68:5; Matt 6:9; Act 17:28; Matt 23:9; 1 Cor 4:15.

d. Physically one dad; spiritually too: either God or Devil (John 8:44).

e. Your father is God if you love and obey Jesus, or the Devil if you don’t.

f. Illustration: Mom not 100% sure who child’s dad is; paternity test.

2. “Did not one God create us” (2:10)?

a. Hebrew בָּרָא means “shape, create . . . fashion by cutting . . . pare a reed for writing, a stick for an arrow . . . divine activity. Gen 1.

b. Greek (LXX): ἔκτισεν means “create something which has not existed before . . . in the NT . . . exclusively of God’s . . . creation.”

c. *Ex nihilo* (out of nothing); *ex cathedra* (by His word).

d. Illustration of evolution: desperate search for any option however nonsensical—to take God out of equation of origins. If cannot trust the first 5 words in Scripture, how can we trust the

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979). The electronic edition is titled, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This citation also applies to all subsequent Hebrew definitions in this sermon outline.

<sup>2</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This citation also applies to all subsequent Greek (Septuagint/LXX) definitions in this sermon outline.

- other 593,492 words?
- e. *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, questions 9 and 10.
  - f. Illustration: Theology 101.
3. “Why . . . profane the covenant . . . by being unfaithful to one another” (2:10)?
- a. First question: fatherhood; second: creator; third: spiritual plunge.
  - b. Question not, “Do we . . . ?” but rather, “*Why* do we . . . ?”
  - c. Hebrew לְהַלֵּל means “pollute, defile, profane.”
  - d. Greek (LXX) βεβηλώσαι, related to κοινώω; from βεβηλόω, infinitive, not perfect; means “unclean, profane, or ritually unacceptable.”
  - e. Hebrew בְּרִית means “covenant . . . alliance of marriage.”
  - f. Greek (LXX) διαθήκην means “agreement between two persons . . . reciprocal benefits and responsibilities—covenant, pact.”
  - g. What is “covenant of our ancestors—Abrahamic? Mosaic? Marriage.
  - h. Hebrew נִבְדָּה means “act or deal treacherously.”
  - i. Greek (LXX) ἐγκατέλιπετε means “to cease from an activity which has gone on for some time . . . to stop, to forsake.”
  - j. Illustration: tendency to underestimate sin/overestimate spiritual life.
  - k. So, why do people profane marriage covenant? God is not their father; own desires replace covenant responsibilities.
  - l. Application: time to seriously, honestly answer Malachi’s 3 questions. Possibly one’s marriage is (seemingly) good, but unfaithful to God.
  - m. Transition: Having answered the three questions, we will now see the connection between state of one’s marriage and state of one’s worship.
- B. Situation: Confess Marital Unfaithfulness, Which Makes God Reject Worship
1. “Judah has been unfaithful” (2:11).
    - a. The Hebrew and Greek were defined in 2:10, above.
    - b. Incisive, Spirit-directed assessment of Judah’s behavior.
    - c. Better if Judah had repented before Malachi spoke, but very often does not work that way. God uses preaching to bring unbelievers to Him (Rom 10:14-17) and believers back to Him (2 Tim 4:2).
  2. “A detestable” (2:11).
    - a. A worse word cannot be imagined for this unfaithfulness.
    - b. Hebrew תּוֹעֵבָה means “abomination . . . ritual sense . . . intermarriage with idolaters.”
    - c. Greek (LXX) βδέλυγμα means “that which is utterly detestable and abhorrent.” Same word as abomination in Matt 24:15.
  3. “Thing has been committed in Israel . . . Judah has desecrated” (2:11). This word (βεβηλ\*/לְהַלֵּל) was defined above in 2:10.
  4. “The sanctuary the LORD loves” (2:11).
    - a. Hebrew אָהַב means, “love.”
    - b. Greek (LXX) ἠγάπησεν means, “love, take pleasure in.”
    - c. Definition of sanctuary (holy land, temple, heaven, God’s people).
  5. “By marrying women who worship a foreign god” (2:11).
    - a. Post-exilic Israel was not the first to do this.
    - b. Solomon (1 Kin 11:1-8); see also Ezra 9:1-10:2; 2 Cor 6:14-18.
  6. “As for the man who does this . . . may the LORD remove” (2:12).

- a. Hebrew יִכַּרֵּת means, “cut off, cut down.”
  - b. Greek (LXX) ἐξολεθρεύσει means, “to destroy . . . eliminate.”
  - c. Same word as “cutting” or entering covenant; man had violated covenant he had been cut *into*, so he would be cut *out of* it. Acts 3:23.
  - d. Removal in church age via church discipline (1 Cor 5:12-13).
7. “Him from the tents of Jacob—even though he brings an offering” (2:12).
- a. Hebrew מִנְחָה means, “gift, tribute, offering.”
  - b. Greek (LXX) θυσίαν means, “sacrifice.”
  - c. Eph 5:1-2—Christ’s προσφοράν and θυσίαν to God. 1 Sam 15:22.
8. “To the LORD” (2:12).
- a. Hebrew יהוה means, “proper name . . . *nomen ineffabile*. . . .”
  - b. Greek (LXX) κυρίῳ means, “Lord, Ruler, One who commands.”
9. “Almighty” (2:12).
- a. Hebrew צְבָאוֹת means, “army, war, warfare, host.”
  - b. Greek (LXX) παντοκράτορι means, “all powerful.” Rev 4:8; 19:6.
  - c. Worship is null and void if we bring it with disobedience.
  - d. Does removal of the offender (2:12) sound harsh? See Neh 13:23-27.
10. “Another thing . . . you flood the . . . altar with tears. . . . You weep because He no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands” (2:13).
- a. Israel loved their own worship; God hated it. See Isa 1:11-16a.
  - b. God “no longer” accepted their worship; there was a time when He did.
11. “You ask, ‘Why’” (2:14)?
- a. Important question for today also; if we do not know why, cannot fix it.
  - b. God was gracious to tell why, though they may have known already.
12. “It is because the LORD is witness” (2:14).
- a. Hebrew הִעֵד means, “testify, bear witness.”
  - b. Greek (LXX) διαμαρτύρατο means, “declare, testify, insist, warn.”
13. “Between you and the wife of your youth” (2:14).
- a. On whose side will the Lord testify? God (Jesus) is “the faithful witness” (Rev 1:5), watching, will testify on behalf of the woman.
  - b. Jesus’ inspection of the temple; the Lord’s inspection of marriages among those who claim His name today.
14. “You have been unfaithful” (2:14; see 2:10-11).
- a. Problem beyond marrying multiple wives, beyond wife of youth, who were idolaters: also devastated original wife.
  - b. This word (ἐγκατέλ\*/נִבְגַּד) was defined above in 2:10.
15. “To her, though she is your partner” (2:14).
- a. Hebrew חֵבֶרֶת means, “consort, i.e. wife.”
  - b. Greek (LXX) κοινωνός means, “partner;” NT word fellowship.
  - c. After sharing so much from youth, how despicable to be unfaithful.
16. “The wife of your marriage covenant” (2:14).
- a. As seen in 2:10, marriage covenant, before God, had been

- entered.
- b. Application: Confess of sin—1 John 1:8-10; bring tears, not tears that God rejected worship, but tears of repentance (Joel 2:12ff; 2 Cor 7:10).
  - c. Transition: Marriage/worship joined closest way; note next questions.
- C. Interrogation: Answer Questions About What God Made and What God Seeks
- 1. “Has not the one God made you?” (2:15).
    - a. Repetition of “one” in 2:10 and here in 2:15.
    - b. Repetition of (almost identical) question in 2:10.
  - 2. “You belong to Him in body and spirit” (2:15).
    - a. We are not our own, cannot do as we please with our bodies; only option is doing what honors God (1 Cor 6:19-20).
    - b. Battle cry of women aborting: “This is my body!” Ultimate selfishness. Contrast Jesus, “This is my body given for you.” Ultimate selflessness.
    - c. Her body is not hers. And his body is not his. And my body is not mine.
  - 3. “And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring” (2:15).
    - a. Homosexual “marriage” is illegitimate partly because it cannot produce kids. God wills and seeks godly children from the marriage union.
    - b. See 2 John 4 and 3 John 4.
    - c. We may seek a nicer car, etc., but what things are we *commanded* to seek and not seek? See Matt 6:33; Col 3:1; 1 Pet 3:11; 1 Thes 2:6.
    - d. God seeks godly offspring.
    - e. Application: Acknowledge, thank the Lord that He created you, owns you, seeks godly children from your marriage union. Apply to singles?
    - f. Transition: Questions, confessions, worship—we covered those. Now for the one true command in this passage, which is stated twice.
- D. Injunction: Guard Against Unfaithfulness
- 1. “So be on your guard” (2:15).
    - a. Hebrew  $\text{שמרו}$  means, “keep, watch, preserve.”
    - b. Greek (LXX)  $\text{φυλάξασθε}$  means, “close custody, guard closely,”  
an aorist, middle, imperative, 2, plural.
    - c. Pro 4:23—“Above all else, guard  $\text{φυλακῆ}$  your heart. . . .”
    - d. Suspect in embassy attack in Benghazi captured. (See Ralph Peters’ article *Armchair General*, Nov., 2013): robust security team to guard.
    - e. Command to guard, keep our spirits in protective custody. Who/what comprises the “robust security team,” guarding your heart? Gal 4:2.
    - f. How do we thus guard ourselves in our spirits? Who or what will be the guardians, trustees of our spirits? Confess. Pray. Spurn evil in media.
  - 2. “Do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth” (2:15).
    - a. “Unfaithful” is defined in Hebrew and LXX in 2:10.
    - b.  $\text{ἐγκαταλίπης}$  (aorist, active, subjunctive, 2, singular).
    - c. “and let no one deal treacherously” (NASB).
  - 3. “‘The man who hates and divorces his wife . . . ‘does violence to the one he should protect,’ says the LORD Almighty” (2:16).

- a. Hebrew  $\text{אָוֵשׁ}$  means, “hate.”
  - b. Greek (LXX)  $\mu\iota\sigma\eta\sigma\alpha\varsigma$  means, “dislike, hostility, hate, detest.”
  - c. Most versions translate that God hates divorce. Some (NIV, ESV) translate that it is not God hating divorce, but the man hating his wife.
  - d. Hebrew  $\text{אָוֵשׂ}$  means, “send.”
  - e. Greek (LXX)  $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\lambda\eta\varsigma$  means, “to send out or away from.”
  - f. Greek (LXX)  $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha$  means, “godlessness.”
  - g. God’s diagnosis: husband who pursues an unjustified divorce is a domestic violence felon, a wife-beater, even if he never hit her.
  - h. When a man divorces his wife for a reason not allowed by Scripture, he is doing the opposite of God’s command, hating her, not loving; doing his own will, not God’s; cursed, not blessed.
4. “So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful” (2:16).
    - a. See above (2:15) where these very words are used and defined.
    - b. Their repetition bears witness to their importance. Redouble diligence.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Unlike certain politicians and comedians, we *are* taking questions, aren’t we? You may not know—or ever need to know—how to find the square root of a fraction.
- B. You will need to know how to answer the questions in Mal 2.
- C. The Big Story—Looking back, we, like Malachi’s original audience, have one God we have disobeyed, one covenant we have broken, five questions we must answer, and one command to follow as we consider marriage and worship, all the while looking ahead to the marriage supper of the Lamb.
- D. The Sermon-in-a-Sentence—Answer the questions and obey the commands before marital unfaithfulness destroys you(r worship).
- E. Big Question: Will you confess your sins, answer God’s questions, and make sure you obey this passage’s only injunction: “Be on your guard”?

## Sermon 4

### “THE CREATOR’S INTENTION AND HUMAN CORRUPTION OF MARRIAGE”

TEXT: Matthew 19:3-12

DATE: October 19, 2014

#### I. Introduction

A. Review of Sermons Preached

B. Bridge to Sermon 4

1. Erika (age 10) asks physics department to identify world’s hardest substance.<sup>1</sup>

2. Biblically, hardest “substance” is the heart of mankind.

C. Sermon Purpose: to teach creation ordinance on permanence of marriage, permission to divorce, and prospect of singleness.

#### II. Main and Sub-Points

A. The Creator’s Intention . . . Male-Female, Leaving-Cleaving Permanence

1. “Some Pharisees came to him to test him” (19:3).

a. *πειράζοντες*: to try, trap, attempt to cause or catch in a mistake.<sup>2</sup>

b. Jesus said, “Do not put the Lord . . . to the test” (Matt 4:7).

c. Pharisees did not believe they were violating this command.

2. “Is it lawful for a man to divorce . . . for any and every reason” (19:3)?

a. *ἀπολῦσα*: “to dissolve the marriage bond—to divorce, separate.”  
Other meanings are dismiss, send, set free, forgive.

b. America today: opt out for any reason/no reason; irreconcilable.

c. Debate in first century: Hillel (liberal), Shammai (conservative).

d. Pharisees wanted Jesus to take a side, which He did not; hoping for a pass from Jesus to be able to get rid of spouse. Letter vs. spirit of law.

3. “Haven’t you read . . . at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female’” (19:4; Gen 1:27)?

a. Implying Pharisees had not read Gen 1!

b. Someone asked if I read *Peace Child*; I said no. Not a rebuke.

4. “‘Leave . . . united to his wife . . . two . . . one flesh’” (19:5; Gen 2:24).

a. *καταλείψει*: “to leave . . . emphasis on the finality;” not neglect.

b. *κολληθήσεται*: “association . . . temporary/permanent . . . join.”

c. Samson was no great model in leaving and cleaving (Judg 14).

5. “One flesh” (19:5).

a. Sexual union, proper, blessed, and beautiful.

b. Only in marriage between one man/one woman. 1 Cor 6:9-20.

6. “So they are no longer two, but one flesh” (19:6).

a. Not a continuation of Gen quote, but Jesus’ commentary on it.

b. Na & Cl distinct. NaCl (salt). Can’t separate w/o destroying.

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<sup>1</sup>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Department of Physics, “Q & A: The Hardest Substance,” accessed July 8, 2014, <https://van.physics.illinois.edu/qa/listing.php?id=613>.

<sup>2</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This information also pertains to all subsequent definitions of LXX words.

7. "Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (19:6).
  - a. συνέζευξεν: "to join two persons in a marriage relationship."
  - b. χωρίζετω: "to separate . . . by introducing . . . space, isolation."
  - c. χωρίζετω: imperative, 3, sglr, permissive: "let. . . ." Not passive.
  - d. Separate of conjoined twins.
  - e. Application: Men: Pray/study to leave/cleave. Women: strategize to encourage men (spouse, brother, son,) to biblically leave/cleave. All: How can we make sure no space that grows into Gulf of Divorce?
  - f. Transition: What God wills and wants for marriage does not always hold sway, as hard hearts get in the way.
- B. Man's Corruption of Moses' Permission is Hard-Hearted and Adulterous
  1. "Why then,' they asked, 'did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away'" (19:7)?
    - a. Jesus' reply of 19:4-6 not what they hoped, thus query of 19:7.
    - b. Certificate of divorce (Deut 24:1, 3; Isa 50:1; and Jer 3:8).
    - c. Without document ex-husband could harm her with finances and with accusations.
    - d. Jesus' critique Pharisees "ministry" (Matt 23:1-3) not flattering.
  2. "Jesus replied, 'Moses permitted you to divorce . . . because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. . .'" (19:8).
    - a. Parallel account (Mark 10:2-4) it is switched: in Matthew Jesus said that *Moses permitted*, but in Mark Jesus said that *Moses commanded*. In Matthew the Pharisees asked why *Moses commanded* as he did, but in Mark they said *Moses permitted*.
    - b. Divorce commanded/permitted. Not original plan; concession. Not *exactly* divorce commanded, but if filing, get certificate. Certificate commanded when divorce permitted.
    - c. Deut 17:17—Kings not to have many wives or heart led astray.
    - d. Solomon skirted Deut 17:17, 1000 times; led astray by wives.
    - e. Divorce never ideal, always involves sin, not good for any.
  3. "Anyone who divorces . . . wife, except for sexual (sin) and marries another . . . commits adultery" (19:9).
    - a. μοιχᾶται means sex of man with married woman, not his spouse.
    - b. Divorce, then marry another = adultery, unless wife adulterous.
    - c. Seven Deadly Sins; "Six things the LORD hates" (Prov 6:16-19).
    - d. Divorce/adultery = heart wicked schemes; feet quick run to evil.
    - e. Divorce sans adultery, refuse discipline = declared unbeliever.
    - f. Commit adultery, unrepentant, go to heaven? No. Prov 10:28.
    - g. Application: If adulterous, forgiveness possible. Ten step process. Adulterous may argue saved, but saved ones do not do adultery. If they do, they repent. Balk at biblical process, evidence lack of salvation. Best primer on confession is J. Bunyan's *Instruction for the Ignorant*.
    - h. Transition: If preceding conditions prevail, singleness is better option.
- C. A Given Situation May Warrant Kingdom-Focused Singleness
  1. "The disciples said to him, 'If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry'" (19:10).
    - a. Disciples being cynical? Humorous? For some, single "better."
    - b. This does not necessarily mean single for life.
    - c. Dating is dangerous game (especially for minors); leads to sin.
  2. "Not (all) . . . accept this . . . only those . . . has been given" (19:11).
    - a. δίδωμι means "to give an object, usually implying value."
    - b. 1 Cor 7:32ff.

3. “There are eunuchs . . . born that way . . . made eunuchs by others . . . choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom” (19:12).
  - a. εὐνοῦχ\* (noun and verb forms here) means impotent sans castration; or castrated; or abstain from marriage sans impotency (i. e. celibate).
  - b. “Eunuch” first century not envied. Outcasts. Patriarchal society: highest premium on marriage, raising children.
4. “The one who can accept this should accept it” (19:12).
  - a. χωρεῖν means “able to accept a message/respond accordingly.”
  - b. χωρεῖτω, third singular—permissive imperative—”let him.”

### III. Conclusion

- A. Hard: diamond; harder: Fullerite 360; hardest: Wurtzite boron nitride.
- B. None of these are harder than human heart when it is set on defying God’s will.
- C. The Big Story: “From the beginning” people accountable to keep God’s laws for marriage. Now “the end of all things is near” (1 Pet 4:7), we are no less accountable to keep the permanence and heterosexuality of marriage for all, gift of singleness for some.
- D. The Sermon-in-a-Sentence: Jesus proclaims the Creator’s intention for marriage, man’s corruption of marriage, and situational singleness.
- E. The Big Question: Will you bow to the Creator’s intention for marriage—it is permanent, for one man and one woman, not to be terminated without adultery, and not for everyone?

## Sermon 5

“MARITAL PROBLEMS PREVENTED WHEN WE OBEY GOD’S COMMANDS”

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 7:1-24

DATE: October 26, 2014

### I. Introduction

A. Review of Sermons Preached

B. Bridge to Sermon 5

1. Pesticides prevent pests.

2. Heeding God’s command prevents four things.

C. Sermon Purpose: Address questions on sex, separation, divorce, status change

### II. Main and Sub-Points

A. Fornication Prevention—Spouses Commanded: Possess, Fulfill, Don’t Deprive

1. “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman” (7:1).

a. ἅπτομαι means, “to touch a woman, marry<sup>1</sup>; ἅπτω: “ignite, middle voice: touch, take hold of . . . of intercourse with a woman.<sup>2</sup>

b. True for unmarried couples. In 7:7, 8, 38, 40 Paul prefers singleness; yet most should marry.

c. Paul lays preference aside; teaches marriage to remedy *porneia*.

2. “But since sexual immorality is occurring” (7:2).

a. πορνείας: “(any) sexual immorality, illicit sex, fornication.”

b. Sexual immorality rampant in Corinth. Ascetics vs. libertines.

c. In America: epidemic, evil. Sex is a god, an idol in our society.

3. “Each . . . sexual relations with . . . own wife . . . own husband” (7:2).

a. ἐχέτω: “possess . . . having control . . . own, to belong to.”

b. Solution to *porneia* found in one’s own beloved spouse.

4. “Husband . . . fulfill . . . duty to . . . wife . . . wife to . . . husband” (7:3).

a. ὀφειλήν: “ought to be done as a matter of duty or social obligation.”

b. Sex with spouse a “duty.” Joyful obligation agreed to in vows.

5. “Wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. . . . Husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife” (7:4).

a. ἐξουσιάζει: “to rule or reign by exercising authority over.”

b. Luke 22:19, Jesus said, “This is my body given for you.”

c. Women who justify killing unborn child say, “It’s my body.”

6. “Do not deprive each other” (7:5).

a. Illustration: Mothers of infants are often sleep deprived.

b. Same word in Mark 10:19; 1 Cor 6:7; 1 Tim 6:5.

c. Some sick souls derive pleasure from depriving others.

d. Never punish spouse by sexual deprivation. Against God’s law.

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<sup>1</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed/ (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This information also pertains to all subsequent definitions of Greek words, unless noted otherwise.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 102.

7. “Except perhaps by mutual consent” (7:5).
    - a. συμφώνου: “agreement with, often implying a type of joint decision.”
    - b. Literally: “together voice.” *Symphony* from this Greek word.
  8. “And for a time” (7:5).
    - a. καιρὸν: “relatively short period . . . temporary . . . a little while.”
    - b. If both agree, abstain. How long? Hours/days, not weeks/month.
    - c. Some spouses cruel, withhold intimacy for even years.
  9. “So that you may devote yourselves to prayer” (7:5).
    - a. σχολάσητε: “to engage . . . earnestly . . . give time to.”
    - b. Only urgent prayer preempts physical union between spouses.
  10. “Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (7:5).
    - a. πειράζει: “cause someone to sin—tempt, to trap.”
    - b. ἀκрасίαν: “to fail (in) self-control.” Not same word as Gal 5:23.
  11. “I say this as a concession, not as a command” (7:6).
    - a. συγγνώμην: “permission . . . to be allowed to.”
    - b. ἐπιταγήν: “order, command, decree, ordinance, instruction.”
  12. I wish that all . . . as I . . . each . . . has your own gift from God” (7:7).
    - a. Θέλω: “to desire . . . to want, to wish.”
    - b. χάρισμα: “given freely, generously . . . gracious gift.” 1 Cor 12.
    - c. Transition: *Porneia* is prevented when spouses help each other; singles have a solution for passion as well.
- B. Passion Prevention—Singles Commanded: Marry and Do Not Burn
1. “Now to the unmarried and the widows . . . I say . . . good for them to stay unmarried, as I do” (7:8).
    - a. ἀγάμοις: “one who is not married.”
    - b. χήραις: “widow.” Feminine noun.
    - c. Several categories of single people. Virgins addressed later. Widows easily identified. Who are the ἀγάμοις? Since they are not married, but not virgins and not widows, they must be people formerly married: either widowers or divorced people.
    - d. Goodness of singleness, yet not everyone thus gifted (7:7), and some lack the self-control to pull it off (7:9).
  2. “Cannot control themselves . . . better to marry than to burn” (7:9).
    - a. Gal 5:22-23 (self-control).
    - b. Prov 5:15-18 and “better” statements in Proverbs (21 of them).
    - c. πυροῦσθαι: “fiery hot.”
    - d. Transition: Spouses battle sexual sin by not depriving; singles by getting spouse; what spouses do when the marriage goes bad?
- C. Separation Prevention—Spouses Commanded: Do Not Separate
1. “To the married I give this command—not I, but the Lord: (7:10).
    - a. Παραγγέλλω: “announce what must be done—to order.”
    - b. Paul was saying that Jesus had addressed this issue already.
  2. “A wife must not separate from her husband” (7:10).
    - a. Infinitive, but earlier in the verse given force of a command.
    - b. χωρισθῆναι: “dissolve the marriage bond—divorce, separate.”
    - c. A believing wife is not to file for a divorce.
  3. “But if she does . . . remain unmarried or else be reconciled” (7:11).
    - a. If she divorces, options are: stay unmarried or be reconciled.
    - b. Does not say, “*they* must remain unmarried,” but rather *she*.
    - c. Professing Christian wife files for divorce without biblical grounds (Matt 19:9). She cannot remarry, but can he?
    - d. Application (him): pray, confess his part, apply Matt 18:15ff; he may remarry even if no *porneia* on her part, but not hurry.

4. "And a husband must not divorce his wife" (7:11).
  - a. ἀφιέναι: same as χωρισ\*—"dissolve marriage bond, separate."
  - b. Though not restated, he too must remain single or reconcile.
  - c. Transition: no depriving/divorcing; no burning; keep status.
- D. Variation Prevention—"The Rest" Commanded: Do Not Seek a Status Change
  1. "To the rest I say this—I, not the Lord" (7:12).
    - a. Illustration: "Show me in red." Yet, all words inerrant, inspired.
    - b. Paul does not contradict Jesus, he interprets Jesus perfectly.
  2. "Brother has a wife . . . not a believer . . . willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. . . . Woman has a husband. . . not a believer . . . willing to live with her, she must not divorce him" (7:12, 13).
    - a. Unbelief of one's spouse is not grounds for divorce.
    - b. Change from situation in Ezra 10:1-44 and Nehemiah 13:23-27.
  3. "Unbelieving husband . . . sanctified through his wife . . . unbelieving wife . . . sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise . . . children . . . unclean, but . . . they are holy. . ." (7:14).
    - a. ἁγία: "divine qualities . . . (not) . . . human—holy, pure, divine."
    - b. Unbelieving spouses benefit being married to Christian. Sanctified, not saved; 1 Cor 9:19-23; 1 Peter 3:1-2.
    - c. Also spiritual benefit (not "unclean" but "holy") for the children.
    - d. Children holy, not saved. Repent/believe (Acts 16:31; 20:21).
  4. "If the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. . . . Not bound . . . God has called us to live in peace" (7:15).
    - a. If unbeliever divorces, let him/her. Not make him want to leave.
    - b. Not bound to stay married; not bound to stay single?
    - c. God wants peace. Stopping unbeliever from leaving: unrest.
  5. "How do you know . . . whether you will save your (spouse). . ." (7:16)?
    - a. Do not stumble over Paul's choice of words—"you will save."
    - b. Plant/water seed; servants, co-workers, rewarded (1 Cor 3:5-9).
  6. "Live . . . situation . . . assigned . . . God has called them" (7:17).
    - a. ἐμέρισεν: "to assign . . . aspect of a function. . . task."
    - b. The general principle is to avoid, to not seek a change of status.
  7. "This is the rule I lay down in all the churches" (7:17).
    - a. διατάσσομαι: "give detailed instructions, order, tell, command."
    - b. Paul then gives examples.
  8. "Circumcised when . . . called? . . . not become uncircumcised. . . . Uncircumcised when . . . called? . . . not be circumcised" (7:18).
    - a. No real way to become uncircumcised; cannot un-amputate.
    - b. Not hide it, not be embarrassed about it, nor try to change it.
  9. "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing" (7:19).
    - a. "not be circumcised . . . circumcision is nothing." Angered Jews. It was *the* sign of God's covenant; set them apart.
    - b. Phil 3:1-11—Judaizers ("dogs") said faith in Jesus not enough.
    - c. From "we are the circumcision" to "circumcision is nothing."
  10. "Keeping God's commands is what counts" (7:19).
    - a. Performing a rite is wrong if it is not accompanied by obedience.
    - b. Obedience not adding works to faith. Rom 1:5; 2 Thes 1:8.
  11. "Remain in the situation they were in when God called them" (7:20).
    - a. μενέτω: present, active, imperative, 3, singular; permissive.
    - b. Example of denying oneself a status change.
  12. "Were you a slave when . . . called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so (7:21). For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person . . .

the one who was free when called is Christ's slave" (7:22). You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings" (7:23).

- a. If low caste, do not worry. Are you a slave? Get free if you can.
  - b. Do not seek to improve your lot or change your status.
  - c. God gave that lot; "in the situation" (7:17, 20, 24), be content.
  - d. Spurgeon—God's "strange kingdom." No standing army; no taxation; last are first, first are last; slaves are free, free are slaves
13. "Remain in the situation they were in when God called" (7:24).
- a. Repetition of 7:17 and 7:20. Why the three-fold repetition?
  - b. Concept crucial, so prominence given through repetition.

### III. Conclusion

- A. College kids missed exam due to flat tire. On make-up test: which tire?!
- B. On exam, profs prevent cheating. In 1 Cor 7, commands prevent four things.
- C. The Big Story: God established marriage (Gen 2); Moses regulated marriage (Deut 24); Malachi has questions and commands to lead you out of marital unfaithfulness that destroys you(r worship) (Mal 2); Jesus proclaims the Creator's intention for marriage and our corruption of it (Matt 19); and Paul—inspired by God—perfectly summarizes it all.
- D. The Sermon-in-a-Sentence: When we obey God's commands on marriage, marital problem prevention is in place.
- E. The Big Question: Will you follow Paul's commands for the prevention of fornication, passion, separation, and variation?

## Sermon 6

“HERE COMES TROUBLE”

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

DATE: November 2, 2014

### I. Introduction

A. Review of Sermons Preached

B. Bridge to Sermon 6

1. Football two-minute drill: no huddle, pass the ball, get out of bounds.

2. Corinth: how to live out a marriage when the time is short.

C. Sermon Purpose: To instruct, commend singleness, though marriage not sin

### II. Main and Sub-Points

A. Seek No Marital Status Change

1. “Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but. . .” (7:25).

a. παρθένων: “not as yet married (and possibly implying virginity).<sup>1</sup>

b. Virgins one of several categories of single people in 1 Cor 7.

c. ἐπιταγήν: “order . . . decree, ordinance, instruction.”

d. Paul had no information from Jesus on virgins-and-marriage.

e. Jesus taught on virgins in Matt25, though not about marriage.

f. Paul no command from Lord; not giving his own command.

g. Instead of a command, Paul gave something less binding.

2. “A judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy” (7:25).

a. γνώμην: “that which is regarded . . . to be the case . . . opinion.”

b. ἠλεημένος: “show kindness . . . in serious need; to show mercy.”

c. πιστός: “faithful, trustworthy, dependable, reliable.”

d. God entrusted Paul with message; trustworthy by God’s mercy.

e. If you cannot say you are trustworthy, begin by praying to be so.

3. “Because of the present crisis” (7:26).

a. ἐνεστῶσαν: “imminent, impending.”

b. ἀνάγκην: “distress . . . troublous times.”

c. What was the “present crisis” of 1 Cor 5? Persecution?

d. Trouble brewing, soon. Given that trouble, take this advice.

4. “I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is” (7:26).

a. Never unseat president wartime; Titanic no time change clothes.

b. Paul’s opinion, not a command, sit tight during a “present crisis.”

c. No status change; stay “in the situation” when called (7:17-24).

5. “Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released” (7:27).

a. δέδεσαι: “restrict . . . to tie objects together.”

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<sup>1</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This information also pertains to all subsequent definitions of Greek words, unless noted otherwise.

- b. Not (primarily) engagement.
  - c. Same word used of woman bound to husband for life (Rom 7:2).
  - d. During present crises in society, breaking vows especially bad.
  - e. Baruch, seeking great things. “Do not seek them” (Jer 45:5).
  - f. λύσιν (verb): “dissolve the marriage bond; to divorce, separate.”
  - g. λύσις (noun): “release, separation, divorce (1 Cor 7:27).”<sup>2</sup>
  - h. But the opposite is also true.
6. “Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife” (7:27).
- a. λέλυσαι (verb): “to release from control, to set free.”
  - b. Not addressing never-married people (virgins) in v. 27.
  - c. Virgins are addressed in 1 Cor 7:25-28, but “virgin” is feminine noun; not someone who would “look for a wife.”
  - d. Virgins cannot be said to be “free from such a commitment.”
  - e. Must refer to those once married, but not currently married, namely, widowed or divorced people.
  - f. Yet widows addressed separately in 7:8 (χήραις), and 7:39-40.
  - g. Thus, must have to do primarily (solely?) with divorced people.
  - h. They are told not to look for a spouse.
  - i. Corinth (society): much sexual immorality, mixed with religion.
  - j. Corinth (church): immature; choice of spouse likely poor, mixed.
7. “But if you do marry, you have not sinned” (7:28).
- a. Divorced person may marry, at least under some circumstances.
  - b. If mind made up Bible never permits divorced to marry, you will define “you” in 7:28 as anyone single, *except* one divorced.
  - c. “You” of 7:28 who can marry, is either a widow (but widows are addressed elsewhere), or divorced.
  - d. “You” of 7:28 is not a virgin, as the next phrase indicates.
8. “And if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this” (7:28).
- a. θλίψιν: “trouble involving direct suffering, persecution.”
  - b. Trouble in marriage is literally, “in the flesh.” It is real, visceral.
  - c. Not all marriages have trouble to same extent, but all have some.
  - d. Φείδομαι: “to spare, to *prevent* trouble happening to someone.”
  - e. Smokey Bear, “Only you . . . *prevent* . . . fires.” Real-time fires.<sup>3</sup>
  - f. Paul endeavors to prevent the wildfires of trouble in marriages.
  - g. Transition: Best stay longer current situation, as time is shorter.
- B. Live Like “Time is Short” and the “World . . . is Passing”
1. “What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short” (7:29).
- a. Short time is related to the “present crisis” in 7:26.

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<sup>2</sup>Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 482.

<sup>3</sup>Ad Council, “Wildfire Prevention,” accessed August 23, 2014, <http://www.adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns/The-Classics/Wildfire-Prevention>. See also, Smokey Bear, accessed August 23, 2014, <http://www.smokeybear.com/>.

- b. Present crises in our world today. Islamic State. Gay marriage.
  - c. My dad used phrase, “short-timer,” of soldiers about to leave.
  - d. Time short for what? Second coming, end of the age! Matt 24.
  - e. Believers in Jesus believe imminent return of Jesus; live like it.
  - f. Unbelievers scoff (2 Peter 3:4-13).
  - g. If have \$10,000 cash, spend freely; if \$1 cash, spend carefully.
  - h. Time short, same true. Paul tells how live when time is short.
2. “From now on those who have wives should live as if . . . not” (7:29).
    - a. Does not mean husbands ignore their wives, nor be unkind.
    - b. ὡς: “as, like.” μὴ: “not.”
    - c. Fireman mourning, still fights fire, “as if . . . not” mourning. Why? Because “the time is short” (7:29).
  3. “Those who mourn, as if (ὡς μὴ) they did not; those . . . happy, as if (ὡς μὴ) they were not; those who buy something, as if (ὡς μὴ) it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if (ὡς μὴ) not engrossed in them” (7:30-31).
    - a. See Ezekiel 24:15-27; John 11:35.
    - b. καταχρώμενοι: “completely occupied by certain means.”
    - c. Live in light of permanent, non-physical world that is coming, not in light of this temporary, physical world that is passing.
    - d. Wake ten minutes before school, live *as if* shower *not* priority.
    - e. Not only is it true that “the time is short,” but this world is dying.
  4. “For this world in its present form is passing away” (7:31).
    - a. κόσμος: “secular society . . . without . . . God; world system.”
    - b. σχῆμα: “nature of something . . . outer form or structure.”
    - c. παράγει: “to go out of existence; to cease to exist, to pass away.”
    - d. See “the time is short” (7:29). Godless, cosmic system beaten!
    - e. Transition: Thus far: stay in your status because time is short. Next: factor devotion and division into your marital decision.
- C. Know If Married, Devotion Will Be Divided to Spouse, Away From the Lord
1. “I would like you to be free from concern” (7:32).
    - a. ἀμερίμνους: “not being concerned or anxious; without worry.”
    - b. Their lack of worry was Paul’s wish and desire. Matt 6:34.
  2. “An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord” (7:32).
    - a. ἄγαμος: “one who is not married; unmarried.”
    - b. “Unmarried” are another of several categories of single people.
    - c. μερίμνᾳ: “anxious concern . . . apprehension about . . . danger.”
    - d. ἀρέσῃ: “to be pleased with someone or something.”
    - e. Single, God-focus, more time for service, church, prayer, Bible.
    - f. Parallel eunuch of Matt 19:12, single (for now) for Kingdom.
  3. “But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided . . .” (7:33-34).
    - a. μεμέρισται: “to divide . . . disunite, division, separation.”
    - b. Love, service to wife *is* service to God, but not in *present crisis*.
    - c. Eph 5 Paul expounds Christ/church, illustrated by husband/wife.
    - d. Here Paul has none of that. Why? Ephesus is not Corinth.

- e. Eph 5 true for the Corinthians too, but not Paul’s concern here.
  - 4. “Unmarried woman or virgin is concerned . . . the Lord’s affairs” (7:34).
    - a. Above, “unmarried man is concerned . . . Lord’s affairs” (7:32).
    - b. Whether man or woman, unmarried life gives more time to God.
  - 5. “Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. . .” (7:34).
    - a. This parallels “how he can please the Lord” (7:32).
    - b. ἁγία: “moral . . . divine qualities . . . (not) human; holy, pure.”
  - 6. “Married woman is concerned . . . world . . . please her husband” (7:34).
    - a. See comments on “married man . . . please his wife” (7:33).
    - b. Divided interests for woman not noted as they were for man (7:34), but it is fair to say it is true for her as well.
  - 7. “I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but” (7:35).
    - a. σύμφορον: “that which constitutes an advantage . . . benefit.”
    - b. βρόχον ὑμῶν ἐπιβάλλω: “to . . . bridle . . . restrict, control.”
    - c. Acts 20:20—not hesitated to preach anything . . . helpful.”
    - d. This instruction on marriage was one of those helpful things.
    - e. A benefit, not a bridle; a vacation, vision plan, not detention.
  - 8. “That . . . live . . . right . . . undivided devotion to the Lord. . .” (7:35).
    - a. εὐσχημον: “attractive form . . . presentable.”
    - b. εὐπάρεδρον: “devoted service to God.”
    - c. ἀπερισπάστως: “without distraction.”
    - d. Devoted service to Lord easiest if one was single.
    - e. Transition: Marry/not, decision not right/wrong, but good/better.
- D. Marry, For That is “Good,” Do Not Marry, For That is “Better”
- 1. “Not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to” (7:36).
    - a. NKJV note reads, “Or, ‘virgin daughter.’” NLT—“fiancée.”
    - b. ἀσχημονεῖν: “defy morals . . . disgrace, embarrass, shame.”
    - c. Same root word as in the LXX of Deut 24:1, the unclean thing.
  - 2. “And if his passions are too strong. . .” (7:36).
    - a. ESV—“if his (margin: or ‘her’) passions are strong.”
    - b. NET—“if she is past the bloom of youth.” The note reads, “Or . . . an engaged man: ‘. . . past the critical point,’ ‘. . . passions are too strong. . .’ Literally means, ‘to be past the high point.’”
    - c. NLT—“and (he) will inevitably give in to his passion.”
    - d. NKJV—“if she is past the flower of youth.”
    - e. KJV—“if she pass the flower of *her* age.”
    - f. NASB—“if she is past her youth.”
    - g. YLT—“if she may be beyond the bloom of age.”<sup>4</sup>
    - h. ὑπέρακμος: “age beyond the prime . . . normal marriageable age.”
  - 3. “Feels he ought to marry . . . as he wants . . . not sin . . . married” (7:36).
    - a. ὀφείλει: “obligatory . . . moral or legal requirement; ought.”
    - b. θέλει: “to desire . . . to want, to wish.”
    - c. If believes morally best, desires to do so, he should marry.

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<sup>4</sup>Scripture quotes here are accessed through Logos 4, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000).

4. “But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind (literally, ‘heart,’ καρδία), who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right (literally, καλῶς, ‘good’) thing” (7:37).
  - a. ἐδραῖος: “firmly established . . . steadfast, unwavering.”
  - b. ἀνάγκην: “obligation . . . compelling, complete, necessary.”
  - c. Confident current status; settled, disciplined to stay single.
  - d. This man is not double-minded and unstable (James 1:8).
5. “So then, he who marries the virgin does right (literally, “good”), but he who does not marry her does better” (7:38).
  - a. In 7:9, “it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”
  - b. In 7:38 new “better” statement; prefers singleness over marriage.
  - c. κρεῖσσον: “superior . . . in characteristics or function; better.”
  - d. Win-win situation: not bad versus good, but good versus better.
  - e. Not that single people on a higher spiritual plane than married.
  - f. In 1 Tim 4:3, “They forbid people to marry. . . .”
  - g. Paul not forbid marry; singleness better, when conditions right.
  - h. “Not marry,” see preference not just for singleness *in particular*, but for not seeking status change *in general* (also 7:17-28).
6. “A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. . . .” (7:39).
  - a. δέδετα: “under the authority . . . restrict . . . under jurisdiction.”
  - b. Nothing on gay marriage in this 40 verse marriage manifesto.
  - c. “Woman” & “her husband,” not a man & his husband, etc.
  - d. Paul on gay practice—Rom 1:26ff; 1 Cor 6:9ff; 1 Tim 1:8ff.
7. “Husband dies . . . free to marry . . . he must belong to the Lord” (7:39).
  - a. Husband dies, she is no longer under his authority, not restricted.
  - b. May marry again, but her new spouse must be follower of Jesus.
  - c. Wise not to hurry into another marriage.
  - d. Pray, seek God, wait on the Lord, consider possible singleness.
  - e. Her friends do her a favor if they do not play matchmaker.
  - f. She should marry if God makes it clear that she should.
  - g. ἐλευθέρᾳ: “to be free.”
8. “In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God” (7:40).
  - a. By now, no surprise that Paul thinks she is happier in singleness.
  - b. μακαριωτέρα: “being happy . . . favorable circumstances.”
  - c. γνώμην: “regarded or considered to be the case . . . opinion.”
  - d. Paul’s personal beatitude to be single and commend singleness.
  - e. Began section, “Now about virgins . . . no command from (God), but I give a judgment (γνώμην) . . . trustworthy” (1 Cor 7:25).
  - f. End of section, same word for “judgment,” acknowledges again this is *his* judgment, something less binding than a command.
  - g. Though only his judgment, yet not random, ill-conceived.
  - h. Given by a proven servant of God, who has the Spirit of God.

### III. Conclusion

- A. More than in Paul’s day, the time is short. How should a marital team function?  
Play the edges of the field, passing plays, use time outs, no huddle offense.

- B. The Sermon-in-a-Sentence: Words of wisdom for the unmarried, and words of warning about “many troubles” for the married.
- C. The Big Question: Will you consider Paul’s inspired opinions—he admits they are not requirements—about status change, living like time is short, divided devotion, and good versus better in life and marriage?

## Sermon 7

### “ROLES AND DUTIES IN RECIPROCAL MARITAL RELATIONS”

TEXT: Ephesians 5:21-33

DATE: November 9, 2014

#### I. Introduction

A. Review of Sermons Preached

B. Bridge to Sermon 7

1. Various roles of a career police officer.<sup>1</sup>

2. Marriage is career choice; fulfill your God-given role in Eph 5:21-33.

C. Sermon Purpose: To instruct spouses as to roles, relationship of Christ and the church that the husband-wife relationship illustrates to the watching world

#### II. Main and Sub-Points

A. Umbrella Principle: Mutual Submission is for Both Spouses

1. “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (5:21).

a. One of the 52 “one another” statements in Romans through Jude.

b. ὑποτάσσομαι: “to submit to the orders . . . of someone; to obey.”<sup>2</sup>

c. “Yield to obey each other as you would to Christ” (NCV).

d. ὑπο + τάσσω = under + arrange/order /devotion/give oneself to.

e. φόβος: “profound respect . . . awe for deity; reverence.”

f. Out of reverence for God, humbly submit to one another.

g. Transition: Above: general; next: specifics mutual submission.

B. Under Umbrella of Mutual: Wife Submit to Husband As Church to Christ

1. “Wives, submit . . . to your own husbands as you do to the Lord” (5:22).

a. “Submit” not repeated from 5:21.

b. “As you do to the Lord.” Assumes wife submits to Lord.

c. If wife does not submit to husband, then not submitting to Lord.

d. If right to submit to Lord, then right to submit to husband.

e. Col 3:18—“Submit (ὑποτάσσεσθε) . . . as is fitting (ἀνήκεν).”

f. Do not buy shirt if does not fit. Do buy—and live by—doctrine  
wives submit to husbands. Why? Because it is a shirt that fits.

g. “Fitting” in Col 3:18 found negatively in Eph 5:4—οὐκ ἀνήκεν.

h. Umbrella of mutual submission most often operating.

i. When mutual submission impossible, wife submits/defers.

j. Movie permission; parents split. Wife to husband: “Your call.”

k. She yields humbly, presents it as their opinion, not just his.

l. Titus 2—women subject to husbands *so that* none malign Word.

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<sup>1</sup>Neil Kokemuller, “Role of a Police Officer,” *The Houston Chronicle*, accessed September 7, 2014, <http://work.chron.com/role-police-officer-8056.html>.

<sup>2</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This information also pertains to all subsequent definitions of Greek words, unless noted otherwise.

- m. Titus 2—men self-control *so that* those opposing are ashamed.
  - n. Titus 2—slaves subject *so that* teaching of Jesus attractive.
  - o. Titus 2:9—”Attractive” κοσμῶσιν: “beautify, adorn.”  
Cosmetics.
2. “For the husband is the head of the wife” (5:23).
    - a. ὅτι: “markers of cause or reason, based on evident fact.”
    - b. κεφαλῆ: “pre-eminent . . . authority . . . head . . . superior to.”
    - c. κεφαλῆ: “superior rank. . . .”<sup>3</sup>
    - d. R. Groothuis argues vs. κεφαλῆ as “authority;” rather, “source.”
    - e. Views of Grudem, Glare, Piper on κεφαλῆ.
    - f. Eph 4:15—Christ is head.
    - g. 1 Cor 11:3—”Head of every man is Christ . . . head of the woman is man . . . head of Christ is God.”
    - h. If deny head of woman is man, then deny head of Christ is God?
  3. “As Christ . . . head of the church, his body . . . he is the Savior” (5:23).
    - a. Dismiss husband head of wife = dismiss Jesus head of church.
    - b. Live headship husband/wife is witness of Jesus head of church.
    - c. σῶμα: “Joined . . . distinct functions . . . congregation.”
  4. “Now as the church submits (ὑποτάσσεται) to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (5:24).
    - a. 5:22, submit as she does to Lord; 5:24, submit “in everything.”
    - b. As in 5:22, “submit” not repeated Greek from previous phrase.
    - c. What might church submitting to Christ *in everything* look like?
    - d. What might wife submitting to husband *in everything* look like?
    - e. Transition: Saw wife’s role; how must husband mutually submit?
- C. Under Umbrella of Mutual: Husband Love Wife As Christ to Church
1. “Husbands, love your wives” (5:25).
    - a. ἀγαπᾶτε: “love for someone . . . appreciation and high regard.”
    - b. Col 3:19—”Husbands, love your wives . . . not be harsh. . . .”
    - c. Col 3 nothing about relation of husbands/wives to Christ/church.
  2. “Just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (5:25).
    - a. Jesus loved, died in our place, paid for our sins. John 3:16.
    - b. Singles: “True Love Waits;” Husbands: “True Love Gives.”
    - c. If husband always loving wife in general, mutual submission then her specific submission will be natural, joyful outflow.
    - d. It is true with Christ/church and with husbands/wives also.
    - e. παρέδωκεν: “to hand over or to convey something to someone.”
    - f. Why did Jesus give Himself for us?
  3. “To make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word” (5:26).
    - a. ἀγίαση: “cause . . . to have the quality of holiness; to make holy.”
    - b. Eph 1:4a—”Chose us . . . to be holy and blameless in his sight.”
    - c. Heb 12:14—”Be holy; without holiness” you won’t see the Lord.

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<sup>3</sup>Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 430.

- d. 1 Pet 1:15-16—“He who called you is holy, so be holy . . . for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy” (Lev 11:44, 45; 19:2).
  - e. Καθαρίσας: “to cause something to become clean.”
  - f. λουτρῶ: “ceremonial washing referring to baptism.”
  - g. ῥήματι: “minimal unit of discourse, often a single word; saying.”
  - h. ῥήματι: “Word of scripture . . . command(ment) . . . Eph 5:26.”<sup>4</sup>
4. “And to present her to himself” (5:27).
- a. Jesus’ sacrificial love had a purpose.
  - b. παραστήση: “cause to come into existence; to raise up.”
  - c. Esth 2:12—Year-long beauty treatments, then presented to king.
  - d. Contrast King Jesus, requires far more (holy), also provides it.
  - e. Buy presents for others. I bought my wife a Hallmark card.
  - f. Buy things for myself (shoes), present them to myself!
  - g. Odd to buy a Hallmark card and give it to yourself!
  - h. Jesus died for His bride (church) to present her to Himself.
  - i. Church Jesus gave to Himself given beauty treatments by Jesus.
5. “Radiant . . . (no) stain . . . wrinkle . . . holy . . . blameless” (5:27).
- a. Before Christ we are dull with hue of world, dirty, wrinkled.
  - b. Jesus’ blood makes us glorious, shouts out sin-stains by His word, irons out our sin-wrinkled lives, makes us blameless.
  - c. ἔνδοξον : “glorious, splendid, wonderful, in splendor.”
  - d. Jesus takes us from rotten like roadkill to radiant like the sun!
  - e. Σπίλον: “unwanted spot or stain upon something.”
  - f. Maids.com has compiled a list of the seventeen toughest stains.<sup>5</sup>
  - g. J. Rowe hymn, *Love Lifted Me*, “very deeply stained within.”
  - h. From total depravity to totally holy and blameless!
  - i. Yet, Eccl 7:20b—“no one who . . . never sins.”
  - j. Ps 14:1-3; Rom 3:10-12—“corrupt . . . vile. . . “None do good.
  - k. ῥυτίδα: “lines or creases in the skin; wrinkle.”
  - l. Too much sun wrinkles skin; sin wrinkles skin *and* your soul.
  - m. ἄμωμος: “without fault and hence morally blameless; perfect.”
  - n. We “scarlet, crimson sinners, blasphemous sinners” have hope.<sup>6</sup>
  - o. God takes us from faulty to faultless; blameworthy to blameless.
6. “In this same way” (5:28).
- a. relatively high degree . . . so, so much.”
  - b. In the same loving, giving way of Jesus (5:25).
7. “Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 735.

<sup>5</sup>The Maids Team, “The Ultimate Stain Removal Guide,” January 14, 2013, accessed September 7, 2014, <http://www.maids.com/blog/the-ultimate-stain-removal-guide-house-cleaning-tackling-lifes-toughest-stains>.

<sup>6</sup>The Reformed Reader, “Bunyan’s Catechism,” accessed September 7, 2014, <http://www.reformedreader.org/ccf/ifti.htm>.

- his wife loves himself” (5:28).
- a. Men, whatever you do for yourself, do it for your wife first!
  - b. Give her last Coke, or share it, without frown or an injured look.
  - c. When love her you love self, because she will bless you back.
8. “No one ever hated . . . own body . . . feed and care” (5:29).
- a. μισέω: “dislike . . . aversion and hostility; to hate, to detest.”
  - b. You may have aversion to anchovies, but you love your body.
  - c. Proof: time, effort, money we spend on food, cosmetics, candy.
  - d. Some early church fathers treated their bodies very severely.<sup>7</sup>
  - e. Col 2:23—even if we *are* hard on our bodies, it has no value.
  - f. ἐκτρέφω: “to provide food . . . adequate nourishment.”
  - g. θάλπω: “to take care of . . . cherishing and concern.”
  - h. This is only body we will ever have in which to serve the Lord.
9. “As Christ does the church . . . we are members of his body” (5:29, 30).
- a. Do you feed self? Bandage your finger? Jesus does that for us.
  - b. We are Jesus’ body, He nourishes us as He is the bread of life.
  - c. He does not hate His body and treat His body severely.
  - d. Transition: Case stated for spousal roles; now for a big secret.
- D. “Mega Mystery:” Christ and Church are Illustrated by Husband and Wife
1. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (5:31).
    - a. Quote from Gen 2:24, also quoted in Matt 19:5 and Mark 10:7.
    - b. Καταλείπει: “relationship to cease; to leave . . . no longer relate.”
    - c. See my sermon on Gen 2:18-25 (leave/united).
    - d. Προσκολληθήσεται: “begin an association . . . to join oneself to.”
  2. “Profound mystery . . . I am talking about Christ and the church” (5:32).
    - a. Μέγα: “upper range . . . importance . . . great degree, intense.”
    - b. Μυστήριον: “not been known before but which has been revealed to an in-group or restricted constituency; secret, mystery.”
    - c. “Mystery” 23 times in NT: in five epistles of Paul and in Rev.
    - d. Other mysteries in the NT: 1 Cor 2:7; 1 Cor 15:51, 52; Col 1:27.
    - e. “Who’s Crying Now”—song by Journey: “It’s a mystery. . . .”
    - f. “Glorious”—song by P. Baloché: “Look inside the mystery.”<sup>8</sup>
    - g. Transition: From under umbrella, through mystery, to a capsule.
- E. Summary Principle: Husband Love Wife and Wife Respect Husband
1. “However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (5:33).
    - a. πλὴν: “markers of contrast . . . nevertheless, except.”

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<sup>7</sup>About Religion, “What is Asceticism,” accessed September 7, 2014, <http://christianity.about.com/od/Monasticism/a/JZ-Asceticism.htm>.

<sup>8</sup>Wikipedia, “Paul Baloché: Discography,” accessed September 7, 2014, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul\\_Baloché#Discography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Baloché#Discography).

- b. Third time in Eph 5 husbands are told to love their wives.
- c. First time (v. 25), love her “just as Christ loved the church.”
- d. Second time (v. 28) love their wives “as their own bodies.”
- e. This third time it is “as he loves himself.”
- f. Imitate Jesus’ love for church, your love for you as love wife.
- g. ἀγαπᾶτε: “love . . . regard with affection, loving concern, love.”
- h. Figure out how you love yourself and do that for your wife.
- i. Wives respect husbands. Same root for “fear” used in 5:21.
- j. Φοβέομαι: “awe . . . respect for a person . . . fear . . . reverence.”
- k. Aretha Franklin (1967) wanted just a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T.  
 Almost 2000 years before that God told Aretha to give that to her husband, told her husband to love her as she had never been loved, as Christ loved the church.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Move from the conventional job of police officer to trendy career of nail polish namer! Role would be to invent names for nail polishes and market them.  
 Bosses give roles to employees. Marriage is a career choice. Your job: fulfill role God gave you.
- B. The Sermon-in-a-Sentence: Husbands and wives have specific roles and duties to live out in reciprocal relations with one another; when spouses do their part it beautifully reflects “Christ and the church.”
- C. The Big Question: Are you sure that your views and practices on marital roles are in keeping with God’s Word?

## Sermon 8

“EVANGELISM AND EFFECTIVE PRAYER ARE BUILT INTO MARITAL ROLES”

TEXT: 1 Peter 3:1-7

DATE: November 16, 2014

### I. Introduction

A. Review of Sermons Preached

B. Bridge to Sermon 8

1. What the mannequin at the mall will tell you, without a word.

2. Tell the mannequin, without a word, that her way is too bad.

C. Sermon Purpose: To instruct spouses about roles, reasons, and true beauty

### II. Main and Sub-Points

A. Wives: Arrange Yourself Under Your Husband to Win Him Over

1. “Wives, in the same way” (3:1).

a. In the same way as what?

b. See 1 Pet 2:12, 13, 17, 18, 21.

2. “Submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives” (3:1).

a. ὑποτασσόμεναι: “submit to the orders . . . obey.”<sup>1</sup>

Present, passive, participle.

b. “Accept the authority” (NRSV).

c. ἀπειθοῦσιν: “to reject/refuse to believe the Christian message.”

d. Active rejecting, refusal of message of the gospel (1 Cor 15:1ff).

e. ἀναστροφῆς: “conduct oneself . . . overt daily behavior.”

f. How godly wife lives says more to godless husband than words.

g. Applied this way only between a godly wife/ungodly husband.

h. Unique dynamic not seen in relationship with an uncle or friend.

i. Evangel: words *paramount*; marital evangel: words *prohibited*.

j. “Unbelieving husband . . . sanctified through his wife. . . . How do you know . . . whether . . . save your husband” (1 Cor 7:16)?

k. Κερδηθήσονται: “gain by . . . activity or investment.”

l. If ungodly husband, gain for Jesus by activities, investments on his behalf. You are a missionary in your own home.

m. What activity invests in husband, with a view to his salvation?

3. “When they see the purity and reverence of your lives” (3:2).

a. ἐποπτεύσαντες: “observe . . . (with) continuity/intent . . . watch.”

b. ἀγνήν: “without moral defect or blemish and hence pure.”

c. φόβῳ: “profound respect and awe for deity; reverence.”

d. Husband observing wife’s reverence for God, and thus for him.

e. ἀναστροφήν: “to conduct . . . focus upon overt daily behavior.”

f. Illustration: Classic Ivory Soap—Classic 99 and 44/100% pure.

g. Purity, reverence very rare, even endangered, in our world.

h. Husband cannot “see” these in you if never together; spend time.

i. Godly wives, ungodly husband is continually watching your life.

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<sup>1</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989), electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000). This information also pertains to all subsequent definitions of Greek words, unless noted otherwise.

- j. Someone lives well, treats me well, I more inclined to like him.
4. “Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles . . . gold jewelry or fine clothes” (3:3).
    - a. Isaiah 3:16-26—The women of Zion are haughty, flirting.
    - b. ἐμπλοκῆς: “fashion . . . adorning by the elaborate braiding.”
    - c. Κόσμος: “an object which serves to adorn or beautify.”
  5. “Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight” (3:4).
    - a. κρυπτός . . . καρδίας = cryptic cardiac; secret, hidden heart.
    - b. ἀφθάρτω: “no . . . decay and death; imperishable, immortal.”
    - c. Outer beauty fades; spirit may shine brighter.
    - d. Πραέως: “gentle and mild; meek.” Matt 11:29.
    - e. ἡσυχίου: “pertaining to a quiet, peaceful existence or attitude.”
    - f. In the noisy din of our world, a quiet person refreshes.
    - g. Πνεύματος: “non-material . . . potentially sensitive and responsive to God (πνεῦμα contrasts with σὰρξ, as an expression of the divine in contrast with the purely human)—spirit . . . spiritual nature, inner being.”
    - h. Πολυτελής: “worth . . . valuable, expensive.”
    - i. ἐνώπιον: “in the sight of, in the opinion of, in the judgment of.”
    - j. Woman’s spirit worth much. Contrast worthless shepherds (Zech 11), worthless idols (Jonah 2), worthless servants (Matt 25).
  6. “For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands” (3:5).
    - a. Style for holy women of the past was not found at the mall.
    - b. GQ—gentleness, quietness (3:4)—inner beauty.
    - c. ἅγιοι: “holy . . . divine qualities . . . contrast with human; pure.”
    - d. ἐλπίζουσαι: “look forward with confidence to good . . . to hope.”
    - e. ἐκόσμου: “to beautify, to adorn, to decorate.”
    - f. ὑποτασσόμεναι: “submit to the orders . . . obedience.”
    - g. NRSV—“accepting the authority.”
    - h. Dare we minimize these women? Commended for silent gospel witness to husbands, for purity, reverence, and inner beauty.
  7. “Like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord” (3:6).
    - a. Gen 18:12—Sarah called husband “my lord” (LXX = κύριος ).
    - b. ὑπήκουσεν: “to obey on the basis of having paid attention to.”
    - c. κύριον: “high status and respect; owner, master, lord.”
  8. “You are her daughters if you do . . . right . . . not . . . fear” (3:6).
    - a. Wife may fear how 3:1-6 instructs her to live with her husband.
    - b. Foolishness to the godless, mocking world. 1 Cor 1:18.
    - c. Ladies, be a daughter of Sarah!
    - d. Φοβούμεναι: “to fear, to be afraid.”
    - e. Πτόησιν: “. . . event . . . that causes terror or alarm.”
    - f. Transition: Wife’s submission to husband for purpose of evangel matched by husband’s honoring his wife for purpose of prayer.
- B. Husbands: Honor Wife As Fellow Heir, Lest God Turn Deaf Ear to Prayer
1. “Husbands, in the same way be considerate . . . with your wives” (3:7).
    - a. The words, “in the same way” spoken to wives in 3:1.
    - b. συνοικοῦντες: “to live with, to conduct oneself with.”
    - c. γνῶσιν: “understanding . . . learn . . . to perceive, to

- comprehend.”
- d. Husbands, do you seek to understand, comprehend your wife?  
How?
- e. YLT—”dwelling with . . . according to knowledge.”
2. “And treat them with respect as the weaker partner” (3:7).
- a. Σκεύει: “a woman married . . . focus upon the sexual relation.”
- b. ἀσθενεστέρω: “pertaining to being physically weak.”
- c. ἀπονέμοντες: “something deserved; to cause, show, assign to.”
- d. Τιμήν: “assignment of status to a person; honor, respect.”
- e. Husband ask wife specifically how to respect her better.
3. “And as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life” (3:7).
- a. Συγκληρονόμοις: “one who receives a possession together with someone else . . . fellow heir. . . . It is essential in rendering κληρονόμος or συγκληρονόμος to avoid any implication of being an ‘heir’ to anyone who has died. The focus is upon receiving an unearned gift. In the biblical sense ‘heirs of God’ are those who will receive the blessings that God has for his people.”
- b. Χάριτος: “Given freely and generously . . . gracious gift.”
- c. Example of inheritance from John Grisham’s *The Testament*.
4. “So that nothing will hinder your prayers” (3:7).
- a. ἐγκόπτεσθαι: “prevent, hinder, stop.” Present, passive, infinitive.
- b. Men, if you get the feeling prayers bounce off the ceiling, may be because no respect of wife as an heir of God’s grace of life.
- c. What hinders our prayers? Sin. Coldness. Lukewarmness.
- d. If prayers hindered, no point in praying until one repents.

### III. Conclusion

- A. Women, do not let the mannequin at the mall tell you how to dress.
- B. She will tell, without a word, about Madison Avenue rules, not marital roles.
- C. The Sermon-in-a-Sentence: When wives follow their marital role it results in evangelism and involves much beauty and no fear; when husbands follow their marital role it results in unhindered prayers.
- D. The Big Question: Do you understand the spiritual and eternal implications of following God-given marital roles?

APPENDIX 16

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

This research is being conducted by Robert Brandhagen for the purposes of a ministry project at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Participants will be asked to complete two surveys before beginning the project, and then the same two surveys again after completing the project. There will also be a group interview and individual exit interviews. All information will be confidential and survey participants will remain anonymous. Please provide the following information:

1. Identity Code: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Current marital status:                      Single (circle one)      Married

3. Have you ever been divorced?      Yes      (circle one)      No

4. Age (circle one): 20-29    30-39    40-49    50-59    60-69    70-79    80-89    90-99

## APPENDIX 17

### INDIVIDUAL EXIT INTERVIEW RESPONSES

**1. Thinking of the marriage you admire the most, what makes that marriage great?**

Their marriage is great because of the love they confess to one another, the respect, that there is never an evil word, and there is mutual submission out of love. Their commitment to one another, making one another better, enhancing, helping, making one another efficient, and agreeing to disagree, makes it a great marriage. They have a closeness; if they quarrel they quickly overlook it, dissolve it, and they do not hold it against each other. There are no permanent grudges. They are like a cloth woven together; openness and honesty are apparent. They communicate well with appropriate joking and show of affection, even in public. They are both godly; Jesus is often the topic of their conversation. They testified that their marriage was great because of the fact that the husband was the ultimate decision-maker in their marriage. Next to God, they loved one another above all, even above their children. They were deeply concerned about raising godly kids. They submitted to one another; they both had an extremely well-developed work ethic. They prayed with their children. They went through thick and thin, came out the other side, and took care of one another. If there is something that seems amiss, one spouse or the other recognizes that and takes the time to stop and talk about it. They hold each other, they pray, and read the Bible. Christ is in them. They get time away by themselves. They watch God work. Total devotion to each other is obvious.

**2. What is the most important thing you have learned during this fifteen week project?**

Jesus set a high standard in Matt 19, and we need to live up to it. Yet there is grace and mercy from God. There are reasons why divorce may be a possibility in a given situation, but not something God chooses for anyone. There is a clear knowledge now as to where to go in the Bible to find answers in both the OT and NT that address marriage, divorce, and remarriage. A new realization has dawned as to what the Lord God intends marriage to be: open, honest, and innocent. I learned about God's plan for us, and how marriage ties into that. God has commands for us to obey, and it is not acceptable to do it backwards. The seriousness of the leaving, *then* cleaving concept was crucial. To make marriage work, stay in God's word, and maintain biblical principles for marriage. I was helped to see that I had a pretty terrific marriage in spite of some difficulties. We revisited the issue of our respective jobs or positions within our marriage. We got a whole biblical theology on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It was holistic; the project put all the puzzle pieces together for a full picture, and now we have that picture. I learned all that goes into a good marriage, and that the opposition changes.

**3. What is the most important thing you need to do as a result of this project?**

Be content with my single status. Be not judgmental, but extend grace. Teach others what I learned; counsel, support, and direct people to other resources, if needed. Stay in step with God's plan, do what God wants us to do. Tell friends who cleave, *then* leave that the order is important. It is important for people to hear the reasons they need to do marriage according to God's plan. I need to improve communication in my marriage. I need to help my (adult) children realize biblical truths about how to have a good marriage. Keep in mind that God ordained marriage, and that marriage was meant to be perfectly harmonious. Remember that Pastor teaches the Bible as metanarrative, and always look at the Big Story. I need to be more humble and submissive. Keep biblical principles in the forefront of our marriage: what is a biblical marriage, and what does God want us to do? Put the lessons into action, make needed changes, keep eyes open, listen, and be in tune to my spouse.

**4. How can you use what you have learned to better serve and glorify the Lord God?**

Realize and declare that a major part of God's purpose and plan for marriage is to have godly offspring. Pray over what was learned. Now that we know the rights and wrongs of marriage we can exemplify what is right and warn others of the consequences for doing the wrongs. Apply what we have learned for the betterment of our marriages, then give credit to God, and glorify Him to others. Consistently seek God. Recognize that the marriage covenant applies to my relationship to Christ, and that I need to apply the rules of that covenant in my spiritual life. Use the information I gained to solidify my own marriage, and be an even better example to the church and community, especially to those struggling in marriage. Even a sinful past can be used by God if we repent and use our experience to remind others of God's forgiveness and restoration. Acknowledge God's control, so that I need not be in control. Obedience to the principles we learned is the best way to serve God. Be thankful to God for my spouse.

**5. How can you use what you have learned to better serve your spouse (or future spouse)?**

Before I married, I would make very sure he believed in the umbrella principle of mutual submission, yet that the husband is the head—to be likeminded in this regard. If seeking a potential spouse, be very careful what you are seeking. Make sure a potential spouse's faith and spiritual gifts are very visible. If strong faith is not present, do not move toward marriage. Be very open in conversation; especially in a new marriage, things must be out in the open, discussed. Treat each other with respect. Ask how I can pray for my spouse. Remember my spouse is also my friend, and speak to him as kindly as I would to my friend. Think of others as better than myself, and who better than my spouse to give this benefit? Be an encouragement to my husband to make decisions. Make a commitment to each other to adhere to God's commands on marriage.

**6. How can you use what you learned to better love and serve the church?**

Counsel others as to the biblical perspective on marriage, God's purpose, where marriage began, and the concept of Christ and the church. Counsel God's professing people that if they are living together and claim to be saved they must separate, get a clear head, stop sinning, and seek God as to whether they should marry or not. Strong marriages strengthen churches. Comfort widows; encourage all single people.

Be faithful to the rules of the covenant as it applies to my church family. Be transparent about my former marriage, put myself out there to talk to those with troubled marriages, as one who has been through it. Since many of us have been divorced, we can share together how to repent, and how to help others to avoid divorce. Be more attentive in listening to people. Let our great marriage be an example; counsel those having trouble in marriage. Be in tune with struggling marriages in the church so we can help them.

**7. How can you use what you have learned to better love and serve your neighbor?**

Take opportunities at social events (such as at a company Christmas party) to be an example, to be a magnet to draw people toward the Savior by letting the light of a godly marriage shine. Have something in your marriage that people would want. Tell my neighbor that if they need anything, I would be there for them. Help remind them of God's original plan in marriage: one partner, opposite sex, forever. Do not equivocate in speaking out about one man, one woman marriage. No metaphors for the sodomite community; call it what it is. Encourage people to live for the Lord in all relationships. Teach people to have right perspectives in relationships—do not put all trust merely in people, but in God. Be with people—in the grocery store, in the neighborhood, and let them see a good marriage. They can tell. Let people know that I am happily married.

**8. What correlations can be made between marriage, divorce, and remarriage and my relationship and/or fellowship with the Lord?**

Practice submission to God as spouse and head, and be content with God as spouse. Going astray in sin is like a divorce between God and His people—it destroys the fellowship. Live out the general (what I termed from Eph 5:21-33) “Umbrella Principle” of mutual submission of spouses to one another, then under that umbrella, specific submission of wife to husband, and specific love of husband to wife. Jesus was totally submissive to the will of the Father; we as the church, the bride of Christ, must totally submit to Jesus. Christ is the Head of Household. It is a permanent relationship (both marriage to spouse and to Christ), it is good, it is God's will that we stay in fellowship with Him. I am bound to my spouse as long as I live; I am bound to Jesus for all eternity. Love God, know He will never divorce me, no matter what I do. I am His bride; He will never leave me. Sin separates us from God; if I struggle in sin, it keeps me from God, and from my spouse. If both spouses have a strong relationship with God, they will tend to have a strong marriage.

**9. How could the sermon series and retreat have been better? What suggestions do you have for improvement?**

The project did not address what a person should do who is single, burns with passion, yet God is not providing a spouse. I loved the retreat, especially the fellowship, worship, and discussion questions. A longer retreat—an extra day would have been nice—and longer sermon series would have been good. Pastor gave no examples of how husband submitting to wife could work. Pastor was also fuzzy on singleness: not good to be alone (Gen 2); good to be alone (1 Cor 7). Because of the longer sermons, the services were very crowded; uncrowd them. Some topics were not suitable for children, though parents were warned about this. Have some kind of children's version. It was enlightening and informative; it was an honor and privilege to participate. Including not only married people in the project, but also every kind of single person (widows, divorced, etc.) was good. The whole thing was a good deal, so get more people involved.

APPENDIX 18

RESPONSE AVERAGES FOR “SURVEY OF ATTITUDES  
AND PRACTICE OF OT AND NT TEACHINGS ON  
MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE”

For statements 1 through 8, a lower Likert scale number [1-6] is positive. Possible responses to the questions were

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Disagree Somewhat
- 4 = Agree Somewhat
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly Agree

Table A1. Average responses to statement 1

Statement 1. The teachings of the Bible on family life are not very important in the decisions I make.	
Pre-Test Average	1.64
Post-Test Average	1.46

Table A2. Average responses to statement 2

Statement 2. I avoid looking to the Bible because I know it has commands I do not want to live by.	
Pre-Test Average	1.79
Post-Test Average	1.32

Table A3. Average responses to statement 3

Statement 3. If I wanted advice from God’s Word on issues related to marriage, divorce, or remarriage, I would not know to which biblical books I should turn.	
Pre-Test Average	3.36
Post-Test Average	2.21

Table A4. Average responses to statement 4

Statement 4. If I needed marital help I would go to a secular counselor, not a biblical one.	
Pre-Test Average	1.32
Post-Test Average	1.29

Table A5. Average responses to statement 5

Statement 5. What Jesus taught about marital relationships is more important than what Paul taught.	
Pre-Test Average	3.82
Post-Test Average	3.43

Table A6. Average responses to statement 6

Statement 6. What the OT has to say about marriage is not needed since we have the NT.	
Pre-Test Average	1.93
Post-Test Average	1.54

Table A7. Average responses to statement 7

Statement 7. The Bible never permits divorce.	
Pre-Test Average	2.71
Post-Test Average	1.75

Table A8. Average responses to statement 8

Statement 8. The Bible permits divorce under certain circumstances, but not remarriage.	
Pre-Test Average	2.50
Post-Test Average	1.82

For statements 9 through 12, a higher Likert scale number [1-6] is positive. Possible responses to the questions were

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Disagree Somewhat
- 4 = Agree Somewhat
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly Agree

Table A9. Average responses to statement 9

Statement 9. People can see in me evidence that I rely on Scripture to direct me in family life issues.	
Pre-Test Average	4.86
Post-Test Average	5.00

Table A10. Average responses to statement 10

Statement 10. Biblical truths on family life are authoritative in my life, and I consciously apply them.	
Pre-Test Average	5.04
Post-Test Average	5.07

Table A11. Average responses to statement 11

Statement 11. The Bible gives specific roles to men and women in marriage, and those roles differ.	
Pre-Test Average	5.04
Post-Test Average	5.18

Table A12. Average responses to statement 12

Statement 12. The preaching, hearing, and applying of Spirit-filled sermons from Bible passages on marriage is the best way to improve my marriage.	
Pre-Test Average	4.86
Post-Test Average	5.04

APPENDIX 19

ACTUAL RESPONSES FOR “SURVEY OF ATTITUDES  
AND PRACTICE OF OT AND NT TEACHINGS ON  
MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE”

In Statements 1-8, the disagreement side of the continuum is positive.

Table A13. Actual responses to statement 1

Statement 1. The teachings of the Bible on family life are not very important in the decisions I make.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	18	64	19	68
Disagree	6	21	7	25
Disagree Somewhat	2	7	1	4
Agree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
Agree	2	7	1	4
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0

**Conclusion 1:** Respondents’ opinions of themselves as a whole were quite healthy even in the pre-test, with 92% marking some level of disagreement when posed with Statement 1. In the post-test that figure improved to 97%. Also positive: only two respondents in the pre-test, and down to one respondent in the post-test, had any level of agreement with Statement 1.

Table A14. Actual responses to statement 2

Statement 2. I avoid looking to the Bible because I know it has commands I do not want to live by.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	20	71	19	68
Disagree	4	14	9	32
Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
Agree Somewhat	1	4	0	0
Agree	0	0	0	0
Strongly Agree	3	11	0	0

**Conclusion 2:** In the pre-test, 85% did well to Strongly Disagree or Disagree with the statement, with the other 15% (4 respondents) being so honest as to Strongly Agree or Agree Somewhat that they avoid biblical input when it conflicts with their desires. The silver lining is the honesty of those who admitted this. The pure gold is that in the post-test, all 15% of those who Strongly Agreed or Agreed Somewhat to avoiding the Bible moved to either Disagree or Strongly Disagree. So in the post-test, 100% indicated they are where they ought to be as Christians, though 1 respondent stepped down from his/her lofty position of Strongly Disagreeing to take a position among those who merely Disagree.

Table A15. Actual responses to statement 3

Statement 3. If I wanted advice from God’s Word on issues related to marriage, divorce, or remarriage, I would not know to which biblical books I should turn.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	7	8	29
Disagree	5	18	13	46
Disagree Somewhat	7	25	3	11
Agree Somewhat	10	36	1	4
Agree	3	11	3	11
Strongly Agree	1	3	0	0

**Conclusion 3:** In the pre-test we saw a photo finish: exactly 50% expressed some level of agreement, and 50% expressed some level of disagreement. The highest percentages were in the two “Somewhat” categories—Disagree Somewhat or Agree Somewhat. The people who knew where to open their Bibles for marital advice, or did not know, were only Somewhat sure. In the post-test, the 50% who held some level of Agreement (that they did not know where to turn in the Bible) dwindled to 15%. Thus, having gone through the project there was a positive impact from 50-50 to approximately 85-15%. Also, the uncertainty on this issue, indicated by the “Somewhats,” fell from 61% to 15%.

Table A16. Actual responses to statement 4

Statement 4. If I needed marital help I would go to a secular counselor, not a biblical one.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	21	75	22	79
Disagree	6	21	5	18
Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
Agree Somewhat	1	4	1	4
Agree	0	0	0	0
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0

**Conclusion 4:** The pre- and post-tests were almost identical: no one Strongly Agreed, Agreed, or Disagreed Somewhat in either test. In both tests, just one individual Agreed Somewhat. Everyone else, approximately 96%, either Strongly Disagreed or Disagreed, which was good to see. The project did not help; the people were strong in this area both before and after.

Table A17. Actual responses to statement 5

Statement 5. What Jesus taught about marital relationships is more important than what Paul taught.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	7	5	18
Disagree	4	14	6	21
Disagree Somewhat	6	21	3	11
Agree Somewhat	6	21	7	25
Agree	5	18	6	21
Strongly Agree	5	18	1	4

**Conclusion 5:** In the pre-test, 42% expressed some level of Disagreement, and 57% expressed some level of Agreement that Jesus' words on marriage trump Paul's. In the post-test the figures were 50% and 50%, respectively. In the end, 7-8% more respondents Disagreed, and 7-8% fewer Agreed. That is progress in the right direction, but that percentage of movement involved only two people. This is important, because it has to do with one's doctrine of inspiration of Scripture. As heretical as this may seem to some, the words of Jesus ("Show me in red!") are not more true or more inspired than Paul's words. With this attitude, someone could read Jesus in Matthew 19, ignore Paul in 1 Cor 7, and think he has all he needs to know about divorce. A point I made in the series is that all Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16), and that we must not pit Jesus vs. Paul. While Paul is not God, as Jesus is, yet where his words are recorded in Scripture, Paul's words are God's as much as Jesus' words are God's. I posit that: far from Jesus' words being more important than Paul's, Paul perfectly interprets Jesus, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. According to these statistics, fully half of the people still do not understand this doctrine.

Table A18. Actual responses to statement 6

Statement 6. What the OT has to say about marriage is not needed since we have the NT.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	11	39	14	50
Disagree	13	46	13	46
Disagree Somewhat	1	4	1	4
Agree Somewhat	1	4	0	0
Agree	2	7	0	0
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0

**Conclusion 6:** Significant movement, in a positive direction, occurred here. In the pre-test, 89% expressed some level of Disagreement, and 11% some level of Agreement. That is, in the pre-test, three individuals Agreed at some level that the OT on marriage is not needed in light of the NT. Happily, in the post-test, 100% were found on the Disagree side of the continuum.

Table A19. Actual responses to statement 7

Statement 7. The Bible never permits divorce.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	16	57	17	61
Disagree	8	29	7	25
Disagree Somewhat	1	4	1	4
Agree Somewhat	1	4	1	4
Agree	1	4	1	4
Strongly Agree	1	4	1	4

**Conclusion 7:** Virtually no movement occurred here. In both the pre- and post-tests, 86% Strongly Disagreed, or Disagreed, that the Bible never allows divorce. And they tend to be emphatic: those who Strongly Disagree were more than double the number of those who merely Disagree.

Table A20. Actual responses to statement 8

Statement 8. The Bible permits divorce under certain circumstances, but not remarriage.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	10	36	17	61
Disagree	7	25	4	14
Disagree Somewhat	4	14	4	14
Agree Somewhat	2	7	1	4
Agree	4	14	2	7
Strongly Agree	1	4	0	0

**Conclusion 8:** In the pre-test, 75% marked one of the three Disagree categories. In the post-test, this rose to 89%. From pre- to post-test, the Agreement side of the continuum lost 14%. This indicates that, in the end, all but three of twenty-eight respondents accept the teaching offered that there are times when, according to Scripture, divorce and remarriage can occur.

In Statements 9-12, the Agreement side of the continuum is positive.

Table A21. Actual responses to statement 9

Statement 9. People can see in me evidence that I rely on Scripture to direct me in family life issues.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	1	4	0	0
Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
Agree Somewhat	7	25	5	18
Agree	14	50	18	64
Strongly Agree	6	21	5	18

**Conclusion 9:** Little change occurred here as a result of the project. In the pre-test, only one respondent Disagreed; in the post-test, none Disagreed. They are a confident bunch! Of the twenty-eight respondents, 100% believe that their reliance on the Bible for the living of family life is evident. Yet, they are not overconfident, and they see that they have not arrived yet: of that 100%, only 18% Strongly Agrees. The other 82% believe it is true, but know they have a lot of work to do.

Table A22. Actual responses to statement 10

Statement 10. Biblical truths on family life are authoritative in my life, and I consciously apply them.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	4	1	4
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree Somewhat	0	0	0	0
Agree Somewhat	4	14	4	14
Agree	14	50	13	46
Strongly Agree	9	32	10	36

**Conclusion 10:** The results here are very similar to those of Statement 9. Here again we see a tempered, realistic confidence: In the end, 96% land on the Agree side of the continuum, but most of those do not Strongly Agree. In spite of their confidence, they tend to know that they have work to do here also.

Table A23. Actual responses to statement 11

Statement 11. The Bible gives specific roles to men and women in marriage, and those roles differ.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	4	0	0
Disagree	2	7	0	0
Disagree Somewhat	1	4	2	7
Agree Somewhat	2	7	3	11
Agree	7	25	11	39
Strongly Agree	15	53	12	43

**Conclusion 11:** In the pre-test, 85% were in one of the Agree categories; in the post-test that rose to 93%. At the same time, the numbers who Strongly Agreed went down 10% from pre- to post-test. I was glad to see the Disagree categories move from 15% in the pre-test to 7% in the post-test. Thus, 8% fewer people tend to express any level of Disagreement with Statement 11, and that is good. But, 10% fewer people Strongly Agree with it (more agreement in general, but less Strong Agreement). This concerns me. Since husband-wife mirrors Christ-church, the implications are massive. I taught positively on the differing biblical roles of men and women in marriage, and most believe it. But three people stopped believing in it strongly. I am not sure why this is.

Table A24. Actual responses to statement 12

Statement 12. The preaching, hearing, and applying of Spirit-filled sermons from Bible passages on marriage is the best way to improve my marriage.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	4	0	0
Disagree	0	0	1	4
Disagree Somewhat	3	11	0	0
Agree Somewhat	3	11	6	21
Agree	12	43	11	39
Strongly Agree	9	32	10	36

**Conclusion 12:** Immediately I noticed that we moved from 15% to 4% in the ranges of Disagreement from pre- to post-test, which was encouraging. In the three Agree categories, the pre-test was about 85%, and the post-test was 96%. This is very good to see. Conferences, books, and counselors that bring the biblical perspective are excellent also, especially over against the many godless relational remedies available. But regular sermons on marriage that “Preach the word . . . correct, rebuke, and encourage” (2 Tim 4:2) must be primary.

## APPENDIX 20

### T-TEST CALCULATIONS

The t-test was used to compare the average of the pre- and post-test scores. The t-test determined if the null hypothesis could be rejected and the intervention considered a success. GraphPad's website offers online software for quickly and accurately conducting t-test calculations as well as providing an analysis of the results.<sup>1</sup> The steps and data entered in the online entry form were as follows:

1. The first step was to choose the option for entering up to 50 rows of data since there were 28 subjects in the study.
2. Next, data was entered from each of the subject's pre-intervention and post-intervention scores. The data can be found in table A25 from appendix 21.
3. The third step in conducting the calculation was to choose the type of test. The paired t-test since was chosen as it is necessary to use a paired test when the columns of data are matched. Thus values on the same row are related to each other, as in this case, where they refer to the same subject before and after the intervention.
4. The final step was to calculate the results which would give the t-test results and overall analysis of the success of the intervention. The intervention was deemed a success through the calculations, finding extreme statistical significance.

The paired t-test results gave the following information:

P value and statistical significance:

The two-tailed P value is less than 0.0001

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Confidence interval:

The mean of Pre-intervention minus Post-intervention equals -6.26

95% confidence interval of this difference: From -7.90 to -4.62

Intermediate values used in calculations:

$t = 7.8424$

$df = 26$

standard error of difference = 0.798

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<sup>1</sup>GraphPad Software, accessed January 20, 2015, <http://www.graphpad.com/quickcalcs/OneSampleT1.cfm?Format=SD>.

APPENDIX 21

RESULTS FOR “SURVEY OF KNOWLEDGE OF OT  
AND NT TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE,  
DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE”

Table A25. Pre-and post-test results

<b>Respondent #</b>	<b>Pre-Test Correct Responses*</b>	<b>Post-Test Correct Responses*</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>1</b>	23	29	+6
<b>2</b>	26	28	+2
<b>3</b>	26	30	+4
<b>4</b>	15	21	+6
<b>5</b>	10	29	+19
<b>6</b>	15	21	+6
<b>7</b>	24	25	+1
<b>8</b>	22	26	+4
<b>9</b>	15	25	+10
<b>10</b>	16	18	+2
<b>11</b>	14	20	+6
<b>12</b>	19	26	+7
<b>13</b>	17	26	+9
<b>14</b>	21	28	+7
<b>15</b>	19	22	+3
<b>16</b>	17	29	+12
<b>17</b>	15	23	+8
*Number of correct responses are out of a total of 30 questions			

Table A25-continued. Pre-and post-test results

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Pre-Test Correct Responses*</b>	<b>Post-Test Correct Responses*</b>	<b>Change</b>
#18	18	25	+7
#19	18	29	+11
#20	26	28	+2
#21	19	22	+3
#22	18	19	+1
#23	20	27	+3
#24	25	27	+3
#25	16	22	+6
#26	14	26	+12
#27	16	23	+7
#28	15	23	+8
	<b>Average Pre-Test Correct Responses</b>	<b>Average Post-Test Correct Responses</b>	<b>Correct Response Change</b>
	18.54	24.89	+6.35
	<b>Average Pre-Test Score</b>	<b>Average Post-Test Score</b>	<b>Score Change</b>
	66.2%	83.0%	+16.8%
*Number of correct responses are out of a total of 30 questions			

## APPENDIX 22

### FACTORS FACILITATING TRANSITION TO STEPFAMILY LIFE

The following information comes from licensed psychologist and professor, Marie Crothers. She has been in private practice, and has taught at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire for many years. Her Ph.D. degree is in Clinical Psychology from Ohio University. She has written the following information for the purpose of this project. Her writing here concerns “the importance of (divorced or divorcing) parents managing their conflict effectively, for the good of the children.” Her observations include “factors that facilitate an easier, smoother transition into step-family life.”

**Children and adolescents who are transitioning into new step-family configurations tend to fare best when:**

1. **divorced parents take their time before moving into a new relationship.** And when a new relationship does begin, parents need to recognize that, while they are feeling positive and excited and optimistic about their relationship with a new partner, children may have many conflicting feelings about the new person (potential step-parent). Children need time to grieve the losses they incur when their parents separate and divorce, and to adjust to their new way of life with two *separate* parents. Introducing a new romantic partner/potential step-parent too soon does not give kids time to adjust. They often reject a step-parent out of feelings of loyalty toward the parent they see the step-parent attempting to replace.
2. **their divorced parents *and* their step-parent(s) manage adult conflicts respectfully and effectively.** All parental figures *refrain* from verbal and physical abuse of each other, speak respectfully to and about each other in the presence of children, and model thoughtful negotiation skills to resolve conflicts.
3. **their divorced parents and their step-parent(s) address adult conflictual issues directly.** (Parents must refrain) from using children to carry contentious messages, either between divorced parents, or between a divorced parent and a step-parent.
4. **the step-parent and same-sex biological parent find a way to collaborate, rather than being jealous of each other, or competing with each other.**
5. **all parents and step-parents approach transitions back and forth between households in a positive, matter-of-fact manner.** In other words, (do not say) negative things that add to children’s stress as they move back and forth.

6. **all parents and step-parents cooperate as ‘co-parents,’ keeping the well-being of the children and adolescents as their top priority.**
7. **both biological parents provide (their children) with frequent, earnest, explicit assurances that they are loved and (that) their parents and step-parents will be there to support them, even though life is different now. . . .**
8. **biological parents carve out alone-time with their children on a regular basis.** Children and adolescents often experience deep jealousy and resentment over the time and attention their biological parent gives to step-siblings and the step-parent. It is extremely helpful to set up a routine that lets kids know that at least once a day, they will get at least a few minutes alone with their biological parent, and at least once a week, a little longer period of time, to allow for deeper conversations.
9. **all parents and step-parents cooperate in establishing a cohesive and consistently-enforced set of rules and expectations, rewards, and contingencies for child behavior.** This helps kids feel secure, helps them manage their behaviors successfully, and avoids triangulation (i.e., pitting one parent or household against the other).
10. **the biological parent and the step-parent in the new household establish a clear, effective discipline system for their new household.** (For example,) who will discipline which children, and in what ways? It is preferable if, as noted above, all parents can agree on an over-arching system, because if all parents agree to and follow that system, the contingencies can be consistent, which really helps kids feel secure.
11. **the step-parent does not compete with or attempt to replace the same-sex biological parent, but rather works to forge a new, uniquely supportive relationship with each step-child. (Step-parents must work toward ) a** relationship that is parental in nature, but that always respects and honors the bond the child has with the same-sex biological parent.
12. **the parents in the new step-family set regular times to touch base with each other about parenting issues, as well as family touch-base meetings, so that problems can be addressed as soon as they emerge, rather than waiting until they become serious”<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup>Marie K. Crothers, e-mail message to author, January 31, 2015.

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## ABSTRACT

### PREACHING A BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF REEDSBURG, AND BIG SPRING CHURCH OF WISCONSIN DELLS, WISCONSIN

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The project explains and applies, through expository preaching, what the Bible says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Chapter 1 states the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, limitations, and delimitations of the project.

Chapter 2 reflects a biblical and theological perspective, and posits that five passages from both Testaments reveal the mind and will of God as it pertains to marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The passages are addressed sequentially, revealing God's mind through His progressive revelation.

The thesis of chapter 3 is that theoretical, legal-historical, cultural, and sociological considerations may provide insights into the current American culture of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

Chapter 4 details the creating and implementing of the project. Through six phases, each of the fifteen weeks is described in detail. The sermon development process was likewise described.

Chapter 5 evaluates the progress in accomplishing the purpose and goals of the project. Strengths and weaknesses are also discussed. An assessment is made as to what might be done differently if the project were undertaken again. In sum, this work asserts the biblical doctrine and practice regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage, as stated by the Lord God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

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