

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We want to start this series out by stating unequivocally that we believe that God's plan for marriage from the beginning has been one man with one woman for a lifetime. God specifically states that he hates putting away (divorce) in Malachi chapter 2. We also want to unequivocally state that because of the wickedness of man's heart that God makes provision for divorce and remarriage. While it is obvious that God allowed polygyny, or, the marrying of multiple wives, it is also obvious that that was not his original design. There is not one instance of polyandry recorded in the Scriptures. Polyandry is the practice of females having more husbands than one at the same time. We will deal with these issues as we move forward.

We are about to address several of the most controversial issues in the Scriptures when we deal with the subjects of marriage, divorce, remarriage, sexual sins, and the qualifications for men to hold positions in the ministry. In this study, we will attempt to answer many questions; some of which are identified in the next paragraph.

Many questions come to mind. What is the Scriptural definition of marriage? Is there an Old Testament or a New Testament Scripture that specifically prohibits a man or a woman from having two or more spouses? Are their Scriptural grounds for divorce? How are we to understand the phrase: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"? Can a married person be guilty of fornication? What is the Scriptural definition of adultery? What is an adulterer? What is an adulteress? What is the Scriptural definition for fornication? What is a fornicator? What is a harlot? What is a whore? What is a whoremonger? Can a single person be guilty of adultery? What is the Scriptural definition of unmarried? Are both parties to a divorce always guilty of sin? Is divorce one of the two unforgivable sins? Do the scriptures permit remarriage after divorce? According to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, what constitutes a church office? In what grammatical tense is the qualifications for pastors and deacons written in in First Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1? From the context of 1 Timothy chapter 1, what can be determined about what group of people Paul is instructing Timothy about? From the context of Titus chapter 1, what can be determined about what group of people Paul is instructing Titus about? The answers to both of those questions will give you some clues as to how to interpret and apply the instructions given to Timothy and Titus concerning the role of men in the church. In what other chapter of the New Testament are qualifications for deacons given? What, if any, church offices is a man not qualified to hold if he has been divorced? Is a single man who has never been married qualified to be a pastor, preacher, evangelist, or a deacon? Is a widower qualified to hold any church office?

We know that we will receive sharp criticism from many of the doctors that preach in the pulpits of many Independent Baptist churches. We will be called compromisers on the subjects of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and qualifications for men in the ministry of the church of the living God. While we do not seek confrontation, we know it will come from those who parrot and defend the tradition of the doctors of the law. There are many well-meaning men out there, who we respect, whose doctrine concerning these subjects does not line up with what the word of God teaches. There are also many well-meaning men out there, who we respect, who parrot the positions of their leaders and have not searched the Scriptures to see what thus saith the Lord. We know that some folks will read this material and the Scriptures that back it up and will reject it outright because it goes against what they have been taught by so and so even though they know that what they have been taught

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does not line up with the Scriptures. We also know that some people will not even bother reading this the rest of the way through simply because of some of the questions that were asked in the two opening paragraphs. We would to God that any and all would take the time to prove us wrong on what we say here. At least then, they will have studied the issue through for themselves. Please do not tell us what you have been taught by your preacher, pastor, evangelist, or teachers if you have not proved what they say against the Scriptures. We will not be men pleasers on this subject because the gross misinterpretation and misapplication of the Scriptures on these issues has destroyed the lives of many great men and women sitting in our pews and standing in our pulpits. Satan has used the misinterpretation of these issues to drive many good, Godly men from the pulpits of our churches and to deny entry into the ministry to many other Godly men. You can strut like a peacock if you want to when you proudly proclaim that you have never been divorced. How many times have you went a whoring around on your wife. Or, how many times, and with how many women, did you have premarital sex. When you get through cutting divorced people to the bone with your unforgiving tongue why don't you ask the Holy Ghost if it is okay for you to put down the salt shaker you used to pour salt into their wounds.

We are personally guilty of having battled with these issues for years while listening to what this man had to say and to what that man had to say without having done a complete study on the whole counsel of God concerning these issues. This has not been an easy road to walk. We have had to throw out some beliefs that we held to and adamantly defended for years. In other words, some of our conclusions from this study contradict doctrines we have been taught and have held to for years. The light of the Scriptures has lit up the dark corners where some of the doctrines we have held to rest. We are going to present our findings and conclusions in the pages to come and we welcome your comments and questions. Once again, we encourage you to prove us wrong because we have a genuine heart felt desire to rightly divide the Word Of Truth. If we are Scripturally wrong, we want to be proved wrong. If your standard of righteousness for marriage, divorce, remarriage, and qualifications exceeds that which is written in Scriptures, do not try to impose those standards on your fellow believers because it will subvert the forgiving grace of God in their lives and will cause them great harm and great pain. We need to be very careful about our doctrine. The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 15:9: “ But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”. Much of what we teach and preach concerning marriage and divorce is laced with the poison of the doctrines and commandments of men. If your standard of righteousness exceeds the standards of the Scriptures and you attempt to impose your standards upon others, then you are guilty of being a Pharisee. This study is our sincere attempt to instruct ourselves in, and yield to, the teachings of the word of God concerning marriage, divorce, remarriage, and God's requirements for church leaders. We hope that you will join us in this study where our objective is to determine what thus saith the Lord concerning the issues of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and qualifications for church offices.

In the course of this study, we have looked up, read, and studied in context every occurrence of the following words and phrases (the number of occurrences we looked at are in brackets):

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adulterer [3], adulterers [9], adulteress [5], adulteresses [3], adulteries [5], adulterous [4], adultery [39], betroth [4], betrothed [9], bound [104], bride [14], bridegroom [24], concubine [22], concubines [17], divorce [1], divorced [4], divorcement [6], effeminate [1], espousals [2], espoused [5], fornication [36], fornications [3], fornicator [2], fornicators [3], harlot [42], harlot's [2], harlots [6], harlots' [1], husband [126], husband's [6], husbands [17], husband of one wife [3], in unto [76], lay with [13], lie with [28], lying with [7], loosed [32], marriage [18], marry [22], married [30], one flesh [10], put(ing) away [64], sodomite [1], sodomites [4], spouse [6], spouses [2], uncleanness [40], unmarried [4], virgin [34], virgins [22], virgin's [1], wedding [7], whore [15], whores [2], whoredom [21], whoredoms [32], whoremonger [1], whoremongers [4], whoring [19], wife [407], wife's [11], wives [131].

Though we read in context every occurrence of the words above we did not use every occurrence because many of the words were used generically such as husband, wife, and wives to name a few. Where a specific occurrence of a word gave a definition, description, or interpretation of what a wife, husband, and etc. were, we used that Scripture in this discussion. The reason we give the figures above is to show the reader and/or listener the massive amount of information that is available in the Scriptures concerning the issues that are before us.

We put a great deal of emphasis on sexual sins in our study because it is the violation of the marriage bed that leads to many divorces and open fornication by the married and unmarried. We have studied Jewish and Roman marriage and divorce customs and law. We have also looked at many Bible dictionaries and commentaries not to determine where we should stand on these issues, but to see where various "great men of God" stood on these issues. What we can tell you is that it is a mixed bag with many great men of God coming down on opposite sides of the issue. Two examples will briefly serve to illustrate this point. One of the great icons of the Independent Baptist movement, C. I. Scofield (a Congregationalist), was a divorced pastor. Scofield was Dwight L. Moody's pastor and Moody knew he was divorced. What that means is that both Scofield and Moody believed it was okay for a divorced man to hold a pastor's position. Many of the Independent Baptist preachers and pastors that harangue against "double married preachers" push the Scofield Study Bible and its King James Bible correcting notes to the hilt. Many of the same pastors and preachers set Moody up as the standard to "live and preach by". As much as we respect the ministry of Dwight L. Moody, he is not the standard that we hold our doctrine to and neither is any other pastor, preacher, or evangelist. Our standard for doctrine is the perfect 1611 Authorized King James Bible.

In the studies that follow we beg of you NOT to read into the Scriptures any of your preconceived notions and doctrine about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Read and interpret the Scriptures literally and diligently compare Scripture with Scripture. Be a Berean. We beg of you to set aside everything that you have been taught about marriage, divorce, and remarriage that does NOT line up with the literal facts and the literal interpretation of the scriptures. You will be shocked at what you will learn. We know that we were shocked. We had many preconceived ideas about marriage, divorce, and remarriage that did not line up with the Scriptures. We held to doctrines that

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exceeded the righteousness of the Scriptures. Regardless of how well intentioned our motivation might be, we become legalists and Pharisees when our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scriptures and we attempt to impose that righteousness on a fellow believer. Matthew 23:4 declares:

Matthew 23:4

⁴ For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

We have discovered through this study that that is exactly what we have been guilty of in the past because we had never completely studied the whole counsel of God on the subjects before us. Many well intentioned men that we love have taught us some doctrines concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage that cannot be supported from the Scriptures. Consequently, the effect of that unscriptural teaching has been to punish and make guilty those that are innocent. There will be those who will accuse us of promoting Peter Ruckman's views on marriage, divorce, and remarriage, but we totally reject that criticism because our views did not come from regurgitating Peter Ruckman's views or that of any other author or commentary, but from an exhaustive and independent study of the Scriptures. While we have read Peter Ruckman's "Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage" pamphlet of 39 pages (19 typewritten pages), we did not read that until most of the preparation for this work was completed.

What complicates the matter before us even more is the fact that many men of God whom we know are holy and separated, men whom we love, hold contrary views on the primary subject that is before us and that is marriage, divorce, remarriage, and qualifications for men in the ministry. It is not a denominational issue either. Many great men of God have strongly disagreed over these issues. I am not talking about the Roman Catholics either who have almost totally forsaken the Word of God in these matters. We have also seen great men of God just drop their heads and turn away when asked where they stand on these issues. Many times that is a reaction caused by not wanting to challenge that which we know to be wrong because we fear confrontation and losing friends. Regretably, most of the doctrine held by most men in the ministry is peer driven. The doctrines that they claim to believe in are those doctrines that they were taught in a seminary or Bible Institute; or are held to by those men they run with in their camp or association; or that are held by some great preacher, pastor, or evangelist; or that they were fed from some commentary or book that they read. Most preachers, pastors, and teachers today did not build their doctrine on independent, Berean style Bible study. The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe. Great men are not *always* wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. The Devil casteth a snare both when we do not meet the standard of the scriptures and when we exceed the standard of the scriptures. Both bring reproach upon the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church. Both are a product of fear and a lack of faith. When we do not meet the standard of the scriptures, we are rightfully called compromisers and soft on sin. When our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scriptures then we are rightfully called Pharisees, hypocrites, and legalists. We will document many of those

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differences between the great men of God as we move throughout this study.

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