



This doctrine contends that only death can break the marriage covenant, not adultery and not desertion. The exception clause is explained in the betrothal view. All the articles on this site are presented with:

Scripture in *'Italics'*.

Words of Christ in *'red'* [hard copy in black and white]

My words in 'normal text'.

King James Version (KJV) unless otherwise stated.

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The following doctrine contends that only death breaks the marriage covenant, not adultery and not desertion. It is an attempt to expose the short comings of divorce apologetics that can be found in most protestant churches.

Every doctrine that justifies divorce and remarriage is based upon the 'exception clause' found in Matthew's gospel (5:32 and 19:9).

Matt. 5:32 *...whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery...*

Matt. 19:9 *...Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery...*

We are told that *fornication* (porneia in Greek) in the aforementioned 'exception clause' can be translated as any type of sexual sin, all potential reasons for divorce and remarriage. This interpretation always results in a guilty party and an innocent party, i.e. innocent party free to remarry and guilty party not free to remarry; this is the most popular interpretation of the 'exception clause' (generally speaking). There are so many variations of this policy that only God knows them all. Hence the term guilty-party-policy or statement-on-divorce-and-remarriage.

But it is a gross over simplification to put 100% blame on one person and 0% blame on the other, anyone who has been through a marriage breakdown knows that is an exaggeration. While it is fair to say that sexual perversion is definitely a reason for separation, it does not make the one become two. I am convinced that the 'exception clause' is referring to what Moses taught about fornication in Deut. 22:13-21. My reasons to follow.

The Not Guilty Party Policy

Any study of the Hebrew marriage customs and laws reveals that the groom pays for the bride with a dowry paid to the bride's father (Gen. 34:12, Exod. 22:17) . Many examples can be found in the Old Testament of this, e.g. David could not afford the dowry for a king's daughter (very expensive) (1Sam.18:25). No better example of this is than the groom Jesus paid for His bride, not with corruptible silver and gold but with His own blood, revealed as a dowry in this example.

Terms and conditions:

No try before buy.

Payment upfront in full before marriage.

One exception only, if the girl is not a virgin the deal could be called off. Hence the reason why Jesus said *"except it be for fornication"*. This also reveals the importance of holiness: if we don't maintain our chastity then we will be excluded from the marriage supper.

In my opinion, the best New Testament example of what Jesus meant by "*except it be for fornication*" is the case of Joseph and Mary. I'm sure you know the story how Mary was found with child before they *came together* and Joseph was going to put her away until the Angel of the Lord intervened. When Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant he assumed she had been fornicating because he knew that he was not responsible for Mary's pregnancy. Therefore he was able to 'put away' his fiancée because of *fornication*. Notice that the Bible refers to Mary as Joseph's wife before they were married.

Luke 2:5 *To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife,*

Matt. 1:20 ... *Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife...*

The New Testament uses the word wife in these examples as fiancée; the same use can be applied to the exception clause: *Whosoever shall put away his fiancée, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery*. This topic is explored further in [Various objections](#).

But in some cases the sin of fornication can only be discovered after the marriage has occurred, hence Deut. 22:13-21. If the 'exception clause' is interpreted in this way then Jesus effectively upheld the law of Moses and set an even higher standard for His Church. Sadly, this standard has been replaced by the guilty-party-policies of our modern churches. Any study on the Sermon on the Mount reveals that Jesus is teaching from the Old Testament and setting a higher standard for His followers; this is the point where the 'exception clause' first appears (Matt. 5:32) and is primarily for the Jews because Moses included it in their law. The Church seems to have forgotten that Jesus is Jewish and the Gospel is still for the Jew first.

Some would ask what about the innocent party? When it comes to marriage breakdown and divorce, the term innocent party is a myth. Admittedly, in many cases one party is the victim and the other party is the perpetrator, but neither can rightly be called innocent.

Summary

The 'exception clause' (Matt.5:32 & 19:9) only appears in Matthew's gospel because Matthew wrote to the Jews and it must be understood in its Jewish context. And only Matthew's gospel contains the explanation, i.e. the details of Joseph and Mary's betrothal. I think the 'exception clause' would only apply to those men who were deceived into thinking their bride was a virgin.

The Church has re-interpreted the 'exception clause' to suit its own requirements and produced many different guilty-party-policies or Statements on divorce and remarriage. For a more comprehensive look at this topic I recommend a book. *Holy Matrimony* by D.E.T. Evenhuis. See the link, [Holy Matrimony](#) A pdf copy of the book can be downloaded from the Holy Matrimony site.

Who taught it first?

The reason there is not much teaching on divorce and remarriage amongst the reformers was because the problem didn't exist. The catholic church forbade divorce and remarriage. Many of the church fathers strongly condemned second marriages, and as the catholic church rose in power they legislated along those lines. When the reformation began divorce and remarriage was so rare the

reformers didn't address this problem, in fact they inadvertently created the problem by allowing divorce and remarriage based on the 'exception clause'. The catholic church did debate marriage during the 11th and 12th centuries but I'm not aware of anyone explaining the 'exception clause' in the betrothal view. I would not be surprised if an explanation of the betrothal view is somewhere in the catholic archives from that period but I cannot access that information, nor it is in English.

I have looked for the origins of this doctrine, and in regard to Protestant thought. Matthew Henry [1662 - 1714] outlined the betrothal view in his commentary on Matt.19 and attributed it to Dr Daniel Whitby. Here is a quote from Dr Daniel Whitby (1638–1726) A Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament with a Treatise on the true Millenium page 166:

“Moreover, whereas all commentators I have met with, by fornication here do understand adultery, or the defiling of the marriage-bed; I incline rather to take the word [porneia] in its proper sense for fornication committed before matrimony, and found after cohabitation. (1) Because Christ, speaking of this divorce here and elsewhere, doth never use the word moicheia, which signifies adultery, but always porneia (Matt.5:32) which word, both among Jews and Gentiles, doth properly import the sin of unmarried persons lying with one another, and so being made one body (1 Cor.vi.16): it is not therefore likely that Christ receded from the known and common acceptance of the word. (2) The punishment of adultery after marriage was strangling; after sponsalia, stoning; divorce not being mentioned in either case; but simple fornication was not thus punished by the Jews. And (3) by this interpretation, the law of marriage is by Christ reduced to its primitive institution; that conjunction with another makes them both one flesh; and so the woman who had thus transgressed was to be dismissed, because she before was one flesh with another, therefore could not be so with the man to whom she afterward did marry.” Dr Daniel Whitby.

Dr Daniel Whitby's work is no longer in print. It can be found online:

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433021030931;view=1up;seq=187>

Various Objections

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Hey Dummy, Porneia Means More Than Premarital Sex!

The most common objection to once married always married is that it is too narrow, for example the word *fornication* (porneia in Greek) can be interpreted in other ways, and therefore there are other legitimate reasons for divorce and remarriage, adultery, incest or any sexual misconduct. While it is true that porneia can be interpreted in other ways, I don't believe that sexual misconduct breaks the marriage covenant, and I don't believe that is what Jesus meant when He said, "*whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.*" Please consider the following;

The reaction of the disciples to the 'exception clause'. When the disciples heard the 'exception clause' they seemed quite surprised and exclaimed, *...If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry* (Matt. 19:10). Their reaction to the 'exception clause' shows that they understood it as a narrow meaning. They knew that Jesus taught you couldn't get rid of your wife.

Secondly) The cultural context of the exception clause. A girl that is 'damaged goods' was considered unsuitable for marriage. Consider the example of King David's daughter Tamar. After she was raped by Amnon her half brother and he wanted nothing more to do with her, she said; *...To reject me now is a greater crime than the other you did to me...* [Living Bible] 2Sam.13:16 She understood that nobody would want her because she was no longer a virgin. Tamar was not in love with Amnon but he was her only chance at marriage and she understood that rejection was worse than rape. There are many other examples in the Bible of this; Joseph and Mary, in the New Testament, and in Exod. 22:17 Moses mentions the *...dowry of virgins*. It was well understood that a dowry was paid for a virgin but if a girl had lost her virginity she didn't command a dowry. This attitude still prevails in many cultures today, only the western world seems to have forgotten this truth.

Premarital sex is the best interpretation of the Greek word porneia because of the importance of virginity in establishing a new marriage. Once upon a time this truth was well understood, and it is clearly written in the old Testament and Matt's Gospel was written to the Jews.

Thirdly) The context of the 'exception clause' shows it to be a higher standard, not a lower standard. Any study of the Sermon on the Mount reveals that Jesus is teaching from the Old Testament and setting a higher standard for His followers, e.g.

Matt. 5:21 *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:*

A higher standard, and this is the point where the 'exception clause' first appears (Matt. 5:32) and it is therefore a higher standard. By interpreting porneia to mean post nuptial sexual misconduct by either party effectively lowers the standard, and worse it makes Jesus' position more liberal than even Rabbi Hillel!

When the pharisees asked Jesus about this subject in Matt. 19 it was because they had their own dispute about divorce and remarriage. Rabbi Shammai taught that a man could only divorce his wife if she was unfaithful to him, but rabbi Hillel taught that a man could divorce his wife for any reason, even a trivial reason could be grounds for divorce. That's why they asked Jesus His opinion, but Jesus clearly distanced Himself from their argument, and set a much higher standard.

Fouthly) Jesus used two different words with two different meanings;

Fornication = premarital sex (Strong's #4202 porneia).

Adultery = post nuptial illicit sex (Strong's #3429 moichao). The contrast clearly implies two different meanings. This point is made very clear in a free book recently published by Daniel R Jennings called 'Except For Fornication'. See book reviews or links page.

Hey Smarty, Gunê Means More Than Wife!

Anyone who is familiar with this topic is aware of the different ways to interpret fornication (porneia see Strong's # 4202).

But what most people don't know is the different ways to interpret wife (gunê pronounced "goo-nay", see Strong's # 1135).

The Greek word gunê can be interpreted as girl, fiancée, wife, unmarried woman, or woman of any age.

Gunê as fiancée as in Luke 2:5 *To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife...*

Gunê as girl as in Luke 22:57 *...Girl, I don't know him...* (NIV)

Gunê as unmarried woman 1Cor. 7:34 *The unmarried woman careth for the things...*

Previously we considered the 'exception clause' as:

Whosoever shall put away his fiancée, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery...

But it might also be interpreted as:

Whosoever shall put away his girl except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery...

I believe that when a relationship is established between a man and woman or boyfriend and girlfriend the Lord would have us to be faithful to that relationship, and if for whatever reason the

relationship is terminated then both parties walk away carrying 'baggage'. One party is often hurt and the other party is the perpetrator, although not technically divorcees they will carry the same or similar scars or guilt and thus the foundation is set for future relationships.

In Luke's Gospel we find that Mary is called "*wife*" during the betrothal period Luke 2:5. Likewise, in Matthew's Gospel, Joseph is called "*husband*" during the same betrothal period. Matt. 1:18 ...*When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*
19 *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.*

Joseph and Mary are referred to as husband and wife when they are engaged.

Stick With The Topic Please.

The second most common objection to once married always married is that the topic of discussion in Matt.19 is about husbands and wives not boyfriends and girlfriends. Please consider that premarital sex (porneia) cannot always be discovered prior to marriage. If the girl is not pregnant and has not been caught, who will know that she is not a virgin? Her father is entitled\obligated to marry her as a virgin, and can expect a dowry. If the husband paid for a virgin then he is entitled to a virgin. If it is discovered after the wedding that she is not a virgin then the husband has the option to invoke the 'exception clause'. Under such circumstances the couple involved would be called husband & wife, would they not?

Deut.22:13 - 21

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: 15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: 16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; 17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; 19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. 20 But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: 21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.

Some would like to point out that under such circumstances the newly divorced wife would receive the *certificate of divorce* and be free to *become another man's wife*, but Jesus repeatedly taught; "*whosoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery*". And this highlights another point that has been lost in nearly all churches these days. When Jesus said "*whosoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery*" He introduced a new school of thought. This was previously not a part of Jewish thought as far as I'm aware. So now there are 3 schools of thought:

Rabbi Hillel: Only husbands can initiate divorce for any reason, and both parties can remarry.

Rabbi Shammai: Only husbands can initiate divorce for marital unfaithfulness, and both parties can remarry.

Jesus: Only husbands can initiate divorce for *fornication*, and only the husband can remarry in God's eyes. If the wife remarries *she shall be called an adulteress*.

Both schools of Jewish thought understood that when a woman has the *certificate of divorce* she could go and *become another man's wife*. But not in the New Testament Church. And so once again premarital sex best fits the 'exception clause', and can be rightly applicable to both married and engaged couples. In case you're wondering why I have only referred to the loss of her virginity and not his, is because the text in question (Matt. 19:9) is an exception for men only, not for women.

What About Deut. 24:1-2?

Deut. 24:1 *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.*

Jesus clearly taught that Deut. 24:1-4 is an option for the hard hearted: Matt. 19:8 *Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives...*

Perhaps this could be paraphrased as salvation is not of the law, therefore God allows sinners to go to hell with the partner of their choice.

Divorced or only Put Away?

Some say that Jesus was rebuking the pharisees because they were putting away their wives without giving them the certificate of divorce, this practise was leaving the women in a legal limbo, unable to remarry, and unable to live with their husbands. It gets support from the directions in Deut.24 where there are three steps to complete a legal divorce:

- 1) 'Write her a bill of divorce' this is a document that formalises the divorce.
- 2) Put the bill of divorce in her hand.
- 3) 'Send her out of his house' or put her away.

Advocates of this view like to reconcile the steps in Deut. 24 with the two different words used in the New Testament for 'Divorce' [apostasies Strongs 647] and 'putting away' [apoluō. Strongs 630] Claiming that it's only adultery to remarry a separated woman, it's fine to remarry the divorced woman. This view has the following three problems:

- 1) It sounds like Jesus is more concerned about the paperwork than the family involved.
- 2) The next problem here is that Jesus Himself used the term 'put away' to mean divorce in Matt 19:8. Putting away and divorcing are attributed the same meanings in the New Testament.
- 3) Finally for those who would advocate remarriage for a divorced woman need look no further than Paul in Rom.7:2&3 and 1Cor.7:39

According to the steps given in Deut.24 for divorce, it should be noted that the final step is the 'putting away'. Use of this term carries the assumption that the previous steps have already been completed. This dumbing down of the Jewish law makes it more reconcilable with the Roman law, and thus easier for the non Jewish converts to understand.

More often this false dichotomy is used to confuse people who would like to remarry or want to justify remarriage. Advocates of this view usually refer to the Lamsa Bible as the authority on the subject, but even the Lamsa Bible got Rom.7:2&3 and 1Cor.7:39 correct.

What About Jer. 3:8?

Jer. 3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce...

But if we continue to read the rest of the chapter we find:

V14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you...

The Lord insists He is still *married* [a husband] to *backsliding Israel* even after the adultery and divorce. Some say that marriage is just a piece of paper, but the truth is that divorce is just a piece of paper! Others have said that it is an error in the King James Bible to use the word '*married*' in V14 because the actual word here is Baal. But this is a consistent interpretation of the word throughout the Old Testament, it often translates as husband, married or dominate[d], and it is an accurate biblical example of the relationship between a husband and wife.

Many people use this example of God divorcing Israel as a model for modern divorce. They insist on remarriage and say that the old Covenant is finished because of the divorce. But I would point out that there is no remarriage in this example, just the opposite. I can't imagine how difficult it would be to remain with an unfaithful wife as per the example in Jer. 3, and it would be fair to divorce such a woman, however those Christians who take their vows seriously would understand that they are still required to keep marriage vows...for better or worse...

The permanence of the marriage covenant can also be seen in Ezekiel 16. It is the tale of Jerusalem likened to an unfaithful wife, but with no mention of divorce.

Ezk. 16:8 ...yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

Ezk. 16: 32 But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!

Ezk. 16:60 Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.

When Jesus returns He will reign in Jerusalem and Israel will be at the top of the nations. As per the scriptures.

What About 1Cor. 7:15?

1Cor. 7:15 *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases...*

Many would like to interpret this verse as grounds for divorce and remarriage; however, if we read a little further in the same chapter we find 1Cor. 7:39.

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth...

The only logical conclusion is that departure does not break the marriage covenant. I think what the apostle Paul meant when he said "*A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases*" is that a believer is not bound to live with a partner who doesn't want to live together. Let the unbeliever go if they insist, we are not bound to force a relationship upon someone who isn't willing.

Salvation depends on the Lord, not your spouse. In other words: The liberty of a believer is not inhibited by the sin of their spouse. As strong as the marriage bond is, it is not able to rob your salvation because of the sin of your partner. Many young Christians think that they could never make it to heaven without their partner but the fact is they can if the Lord so requires because he is able to keep those that trust in Him. Consider how the New Living Translation interprets 1Cor. 7:15:

But if the husband or wife who isn't a Christian insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the Christian husband or wife is not required to stay with them, for God wants his children to live in peace.

Holy Bible, New Living Translation, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1996.

Again, if we consider the unbelieving wife (Israel) deserted her innocent husband (God), then based on that example it would be safe to say that unbelief/desertion is grounds for separation or possibly even divorce but certainly not remarriage. Those that say God divorced Israel and married the church have not paid attention to the details concerning the two different covenants. The church is only betrothed, not yet married: 2 Cor. 11:2 *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

If in 1Cor. 7:15 the apostle Paul gives grounds for divorce and remarriage, then he blatantly contradicts himself in 1Cor.7:39 and again in Rom. 7:2 *For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.* And contradicts the '*whosoever*' doctrine of Jesus.

What About 2Cor. 5:17?

2Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Many would like to justify divorce and remarriage using the above verse, but contrary to popular belief being a 'new creation' does not annul the first marriage vow or covenant. When we are 'born-again' our sins are forgiven, not our vows. Christ atoned for our sins. Our marriage vows need no atonement because it is not a sin to marry. 1Cor. 7:28 *But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned...* There are many who say "my first marriage was sinful and the Lord has forgiven me of my first marriage and subsequent divorce". And then they try to justify their remarriage with 2 Cor. 5:17 *...old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

When all things 'become new' that would include original marriage vows, not subsequent remarriage. Please note that Matthew, Mark and Luke all refer to Herodias as *Philip's wife* when she was remarried to Herod (Matt. 14:3; Mark 6:17; Luke 3:19). This reflects the attitude of the New Testament authors towards divorce and remarriage. Confusion begins when we call something a "sin" that the Lord says is not a sin.

John the Baptist boldly preached his outrageous views on divorce and remarriage and lost his head because of it. Who are we to have another position?

Deut. 23:23 *That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.*

The original wedding vows, as printed in The Book of Common Prayer [Church of England], are:
Groom: I, _____, take thee, _____, to my wedded Wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

Bride: I, _____, take thee, _____, to my wedded Husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

I realize that about 100 years ago the words "to obey" have been removed from her side of the vow. This change reflects the advance of feminism into the church, and reveals that these churches are following the trend of world, not the Lord Jesus. These old vows worked when the church had some power, but now marriage is reduced to just another tool of the state to increase its control over the populous, it shows how useless the churches are becoming.

What About 1Cor. 7:9?

1Cor. 7:9... *let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.*

It is clear that the people referred to in this verse are the 'unmarried and widows' (see V8), both of which are to be considered eligible for marriage or remarriage, not necessarily the case for divorcees.

1Cor. 7:2 *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*

Again in this verse marriage is preferred to sexual sin, however, the apostle Paul makes it clear in verse 6 that he speaks by *permission*, and *not of commandment*. Adultery is not the cure for fornication, and remarriage is not advocated by this verse.

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

Please note that when the Lord God spoke these words he was referring to a man [Adam] that was a

perfect creation, a far cry from what man is today. In fact it could be argued that today it is good that the man and/or woman should be alone, in some cases.

What About Psalm 68:6?

Psalm 68:6 *God setteth the solitary in families:*

Some would try to justify an adulterous remarriage based on this verse, claiming that God had arranged the relationship, however Psalm 68:6 can be correctly interpreted in other ways, e.g.

God causes the lonely to live at home; (Literal translation of the Holy Bible)

God--causing the lonely to dwell at home, (Young's Literal Translation 1898)

From the literal translations we find a meaning that can be seen even in the KJV, that is: Every family has those members who live alone, and this is something that God does.

Other translations render the verse with a slightly different meaning:

God sets the desolate in a homeland, (New International Version footnote)

Who gives a home to the forsaken, (New American Bible)

The Multiple Marriage Merry-Go-Round

The account of the woman at the well gives us some insight into the ways of the Lord. John 4:6-29. Not only was the woman Samaritan but she had five and a half husbands as well! Her 'track-record' was no deterrent to the Lord as He spoke openly to her. Jesus indirectly referred to her previous relationships as marriages when He said:

John. 4:18 *For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband.* This is interesting for a number of reasons:

1) Some say that because the Lord called her previous men "*husbands*", the previous marriages must have been legit. It is safe to say that His choice of words doesn't change His doctrine. He was speaking to a woman who was neither Jew nor believer, I would say he was being polite and speaking in terms that she would understand. The fact that He raised her situation with her shows that it was in desperate need of some correction\adjustment. It would be silly to think that marrying her current lover would make everything ~rosy~. Why should it? We cannot really change our lives. Only the Holy Spirit can do that, and in the event that she were to receive the Holy Spirit, [the very thing she asked for] she would only continue in her previous sins unless she practiced what Jesus taught. "*whosoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery*".

That poor woman's plight epitomizes the multiple-marriage-merry-go-round. People with a history of failed marriages usually abandon their shattered notions of marriage, and no longer bother with the formality of a marriage ceremony. Rather, they just try to have a relationship they can live with. She was not in denial of her lamentable situation, she knew it was adulterous, Jesus knew it was adulterous, so why try to dress it up as something it is not? The multiple marriage merry-go-round goes round and around until the patrons realise the futility of the exercise and move on. Or worse, an adulterous union is successful at the expense of the souls involved. Some marriages appear successful on the surface but they are partly held together by guilt or other factors.

2) If we consider the status of women at the time, I would suggest that the woman at the well must have had something going for her, i.e. good looks or money. How else could she keep finding men that were interested in her? My guess is she would have been quite attractive in her day.

3) The 'arms-length' approach that Jesus uses to deal with her request, which He prompted. The conversation at the well took a very unusual twist when she asked for the living water, it certainly reveals that her current relationship situation/history was a hindrance to receiving the living water. How different was Jesus' response to her request from what we often hear today preached; she asked for living water, but Jesus wanted to sort out her sorry relationship history. Which, if left uncorrected, would no doubt continue as she developed her faith and cause many problems for her and the other believers she would be involved with. If the woman at the well is the poster-girl for divorce and remarriage, consider how Jesus addressed her situation: 1) Denied her request for living water. 2) Drew her attention as to why He would not give her the living water [i.e. her marriage resume] 3) Back in verse 12 she identifies as a descendant of Jacob, she clearly is a *lost sheep of the house of Israel*. 4) The way she was pivotal in convincing her village as to the identity of Jesus Christ. God's ways are not our ways, and He works according to His plan [election], even using someone who is in a situation that is not good. I'm guessing that her newly acquired religious activity caused her latest relationship to suffer...I could be wrong... but the relationship she though would last probably took a turn-for-the-worse when she evangelised her village. Ever seen a situation like this?

Divorce In The Bible

The first record of divorce in the scripture is interesting for a couple of reasons, firstly because of the relationship itself, and secondly because of the allegorical context. The Lord had just promised Abram that his seed [children] would inherit the land. Gen.15:8 ...*Unto thy seed have I given this land* ... The problem was that Abram didn't have any children, he was 86 years old and Sarai was past having children. It appears that Sarai figured out a way to get children, Gen. 16:3 ... *Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife*. Hagar becomes Abram's wife only to bear children, a surrogate mother.

Anyway approx.16-20 years later, after Sara has had her own child with Abraham, Hagar gets kicked-out and leaves with Abram's son Ishmael and a loaf of bread and a bottle of water. Gen. 21:14 *And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away...* This story has all the modern ingredients:

1) Heaven ordained divorce, i.e.

"Cast out the bondwoman and her son,"

2) An "innocent-party" in Hagar.

What had Hagar done to get kicked out of home?

Ironically in the New Testament, Paul uses Hagar and Sara's situation as an allegory. Gal.4:22-31.

Hagar, the bondwoman, is a 'type':

A type of single mother.

A type of divorcee.

A type of an innocent party.

A type of forerunner.

I wonder what the divorce apologists would say if they knew that their theology is illustrated by the bondwoman? And in pursuing this allegory, could it not be reasoned like this: Cast out the bondwoman [innocent party] and her son [the divorce apologists]? If my reasoning seems unfair, please bear in mind that the Scripture says, *"Cast out the bondwoman and her son,"* not me. If the Scripture seems unfair, then Hath not the potter the right to make one vessel unto honor and another to dishonor?

Another example of divorce in the Scripture is found in Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13. After the Babylonian captivity, when Jerusalem was in the process of restoration, it was discovered that many of the children of Israel had married foreigners, in direct contradiction of the Law. Deut. 7:3 *Neither shalt thou make marriages with them...*

So Ezra and Nehemiah insisted that the mixed marriages be separated.

Ezra 10:19 *And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.*

Neh. 13:3 *Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.*

This example is interesting for a number of reasons.

Could this be a precedent for divorce? For example; unsanctified marriages to be terminated. I wonder if the Church would ever rise to such a position, and demand that unsanctified marriages be terminated? If the New Testament Church is founded on better promises than Israel's covenant, why is the current standard so slack? Most churches try to whitewash adulterous remarriage rather than deal with the issue. These days with more and more churches hungry for members, I doubt that any would raise any questions about remarriage. Oddly enough the homosexual community make this same argument against the churches saying that they accept adulterers why not accept homosexuals?

Please understand that if this example [Ezra 10] is to be considered a precedent for divorce, it is not to be considered a precedent for remarriage. Anyone considering terminating an adulterous marriage would need to do so with eyes-wide, in other words, better get used to living alone.

The Gnats And Camels Index

Jesus described big sins as camels and little sins as gnats.

Matt. 23:24 *Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.*

It is important to use the gnats and camels scale when looking at divorce and remarriage. Please consider that remarriage comes in various shades. From blackest sin to tainted white. There are some people who try to trivialize remarriage because of this. They exploit people's doubts and create uncertainty in the minds of those who would speak out against divorce and remarriage. By belittling a 'gnat' into a non-existent sin, they would then expect everyone to *swallow a camel*, even insisting that it's ok to marry a divorced woman. I have discovered that guilty-party-policies can be made to flex in this fashion, indeed many GPPs are designed for this very purpose. I have noticed that people who *strain out gnats* are often the same people who have previously *swallowed a camel*, but I digress. Using the 'gnats and camels index' how would we assess the following examples? David and Michal were married. Saul forced them to separate, and both parties remarried.

1) David [re]married Abigail 1Sam 25:42. And Michal's remarried Phaltiel 1Sam 25:44. God honored David's second marriages [2Sam 3:2-5]. God did not honor Michal's second marriage. It was always adulterous [a camel]. Neither David or Michal ever divorced, they were always married. But his second marriage was blessed not hers. David's second marriage is not even a 'gnat'. Michal's second marriage is more than a 'gnat', but what else could she do? Her dad forced her. Saul is the one who must own the 'camel' in this example. Some would argue that this [David's example] is a good enough reason to endorse remarriage. But to make sense of this we should consider the differences between men and women. See [Twice married always married](#).

2) King Ahasuerus divorced his first wife [Queen Vashti], and remarried Esther amongst others. [Esther 1]. It is fair to say that God honored that marriage, but according to Jesus' doctrine King Ahasuerus committed adultery because he divorced his wife and remarried. Esther was a Jewish believer, Ahasuerus was a pagan. Can one party be guilty of adultery and not the other? The crime [camel] here is divorce, Ahasuerus had sinned against Vashti when he divorced her, the [re]marriage to Esther is a 'gnat' compared to the camel of divorce. The other wildcard in this example is the fact that Jews were forbidden to marry foreigners.

3) Herodias remarried Herod. This union was adulterous and incestuous, [a camel with two humps!] God's word concerning this marriage came from John the baptist. It seems like they died in their sin.

It is difficult to evaluate remarriage without all the factors, not the least of which is the basic differences between men and women. It is safe to say things like:

whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Rom. 7:2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

1Cor. 7:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

Twice Married Always Married

TL,DR: Polygyny is the lesser of evils when compared to adultery. Polygyny is not promoted anywhere in the Scripture, but neither is it condemned. It is presented here only as an alternative to divorce apologetics.

Intro

Sometimes I get asked, 'What about this situation or that situation?' And rather than present a list of hypothetical remarriage scenarios, I would like to try to answer the questions with the examples recorded in the Scripture. In the Bible we find a variety of situations that differ according to gender, nationality, position and Grace. Christians who are already involved in remarriage need to have good information, and so I would like to approach this subject not as an endorsement of second marriage or polygyny, but to address the concerns I am sometimes confronted with.

As a generalization, Twice Married Always Married doesn't work as well as Once married always married. There are a couple of reasons for this:

- . Because it could only apply to some men. [i.e. victims of no fault divorce]
- . Because some/many of the examples in the Bible only have the status of concubine not wife, and these poor women don't fare so well, compare Sara and Hagar.

Having said that I believe that some second marriages are just as valid as first marriages, and in that context Twice Married Always Married does work. And these marriages require the same level of commitment as any other marriage. If only death can break the marriage covenant then some remarried men are polygamists whether they believe it or not. Call it polygyny, or call it remarriage there is some of it in the lineage of Christ. And while it isn't endorsed anywhere in the Scripture, nor is it recorded as a sin per se.

I realize that in many western countries polygyny is illegal, and as Christians we must uphold the laws of our country. This alone is reason enough to forbid polygyny. But it is not my intention to endorse or forbid polygyny, rather to examine what the Scripture says and how this bears on some second marriages. Any study of divorce and remarriage should address the topic because it does play a part in forming a biblical understanding of the subject.

It becomes necessary at this point to reveal some of my theological bias, I believe that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever*. And furthermore I believe that if it were possible for the Lord to save a polygamist in the Old Testament, I believe that it is possible to save a polygamist in the New Testament. I am well aware of the "*one wife*" stance that the apostle Paul established and I agree wholeheartedly with it, but it doesn't exclude polygamists from salvation, only from holding church office. No doubt many would disagree with my thinking here but please let me explain. It is important to give the benefit of the doubt to the marriage wherever possible, and when a man has married more than once I would assume he has more than one wife. Unless he divorced his first wife to remarry his second wife.

Polygyny Or Remarriage

One observation I would like to make is that the champions of divorce and remarriage nearly always forbid polygyny, preferring to whitewash adultery rather than even consider the fact that some men might have more than one wife. They just don't want to go there. They often wheel-out feeble arguments against it and don't even bother pursuing the subject. Both schools of thought [Calvinist and Dispensationalist] dismiss polygyny for different reasons:

- Dispensationalists tend to fall back on the old argument; 'what-God-permitted-in-the-Old-Testament-[polygyny],-He-has-now-forbidden-in-the-New-Testament'. And then fail to present a convincing argument to support their position. Ignoring the '*Same yesterday today and forever*' argument that the Calvinists so dearly love.
- And the Calvinists tend to avoid the topic, perhaps because it will create an obvious hole in Chapter 24 of the Westminster Confession. John Murray didn't address the subject in his book 'Divorce', and yet I believe it is impossible to do justice to the subject without dealing with the examples of polygyny recorded in the Scriptures. Jay Adams deals with polygyny in the context of remarriage, but doesn't explain the differences between the two.

Which begs the question, 'What is the difference between polygyny and remarriage?' And the answer is defined by various factors:

- The difference between men and women. It's possible that a man can maintain more than one wife and still be saved, but a woman cannot maintain more than one husband and be saved.
- Divorce. The examples in Scripture of polygyny show that men didn't divorce one wife to marry another, rather they accumulated wives and maintained them all. This is not permitted in most western countries these days, for good reasons.
- Sometimes there isn't a difference, in other words polygyny is remarriage in some cases. If only death can break the marriage covenant then some second marriages equate to polygyny even though a divorce may have occurred. Under these circumstances polygyny is called remarriage. But this tends to cause confusion between good remarriage and evil remarriage, and some folks like to condemn all remarriage.

Some Examples

The first mention of polygyny in the Bible is Lamech, and it is worth noting that he is a descendant of Cain. The context here is about all we have to go on in regard to this practice, and it ain't good. Just the fact that it is mentioned in the lineage of Cain is an indicator that it is associated with the children-of-a-lesser-god, not synonymous with damnation, but certainly not the practice of the godly either. It is worth mentioning that Lamech didn't divorce one wife to marry another, rather he just had two wives. So Lamech does get 'first mention' status, and casts the practice in a shadow. Contrast this with the example of Adam and Eve as God's model and it looks even worse.

The next polygamist of note would have to be Abraham. And what a contrast to Lamech. The Scripture records the names of three of Abraham's wives, Sara, Hagar, and Keturah, Abe also had concubines: Gen 25:6 *But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son...* Saints don't get much godlier than Abraham, but consider how much grief was the result of Abraham and Hagar's polygynous union. Not only did the child of the flesh 'wild-man-Ishmael' make problems for Isaac, and later Israel, but even today much

of the antagonism between Arabs and Jews can be explained by the overtly anti-Jewish propaganda coming out of Islam. This is not a glowing testimony for polygyny, nor does it damn Abraham.

Esau and Jacob are the next examples of polygyny and they are both interesting and ironic for the following reasons:

- . Consider that polygyny in this family has become generational. What begun with Abraham is now common amongst his descendants.
- . Esau was an enthusiastic polygamist [Gen.26:34], and it seemed to be to spite his parent's desires. Gen.28:8-9
- . Jacob was given a charge not to marry a local Hittite girl, but to get a wife from his mother's family in Padan-aram, only to return with two wives and two concubines! I realize that Isaac & Rebekah's objection was not with polygyny, but rather the habits of the local girls, but both Esau & Jacob became polygamists for very different reasons. Esau, because he was evil. And Jacob, because he was tricked into polygyny by his father in law. Every parent wants the best for their children, and I'm sure that Isaac and Rebekah wanted their boys to have good marriages. Instead Esau was womanizer, and Jacob inadvertently had four wives.

It is with the example of Jacob and Esau that we can see one of the main reasons why polygyny is not the practice of Godly people. Esau was a man of unbridled passions, it seems that he denied himself nothing when it come to women. And so he indulged himself at the expense of others around him. I'm sure his wives hated the practice, it was obvious that his parents hated the practice, and I sure that even he didn't like the problems it created for him. But he was a slave to his lust and it showed itself in his polygynous relationships.

Heb 12:16 *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.* In this context we can see what is politely called 'polygyny', is really just Esau's lust. Paul uses Jacob and Esau to represent election and reprobation in Romans chapter 9. Their characters are here reflected in their reasons for their choice of women, Jacob only wanted one wife not four. And Esau was both profane and disobedient to the wishes of his parents.

Some say that Moses was a polygamist, but the case for this is weak. Who is the *Ethiopian woman whom he had married* ? [Numbers12:1] It is difficult to say for sure, it could be Zipporah, or it could be her predecessor, or it could be a second wife. But the Scripture doesn't say with any certainty. And I ain't sticking my neck out on this one. But Moses did have some interesting things to say concerning the subject, not the least of which would be:

Deu 17:17 *Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.*

This verse places restriction upon future kings concerning polygyny and money. I doesn't forbid multiple wives for the general populous but it does restrict the practice, Solomon ignored this command and the result speaks for itself. Moses also gave other regulations concerning polygyny:

Deut. 21:15-17 *Suppose a man has two wives and loves one more than the other. The first son of either wife is the man's first-born son, even if the boy's mother is the wife the man doesn't love. Later, when the man is near death and is dividing up his property, he must give a double share to his first-born son, simply because he was the first to be born.* (Contemporary English Version)

I realize that this passage of Scripture is dealing with the '*right of the firstborn*', but it is interesting to note that one wife is preferred to the other. I can almost hear the feminists shrieking in horror at the very thought of such a situation, but this is typical of what we find in any polygynous relationship. Consider that Jacob loved Rachel, not his other wives. And it is to be expected that any man with more than one wife will have a preference between them. And this shows another reason why polygyny is not the practice of Godly people. And I think this is the main objection to polygyny in both the world and the Church. In the world, because it is politically correct to forbid such arrangements, and in the Church, because 'serial monogamy' [read adultery] is much easier to peddle than polygyny.

This thing gets worse in the marriage of Elkanah to Peninnah and Hannah [1st Samuel chapter 1]. Not only did Elkanah prefer Hannah, but Peninnah mocked Hannah because she had no children! I suppose it was jealousy that made her do it, but what a miserable situation for poor Hannah, hardly anybody's concept of marriage. It makes you wonder why women would get involved in such a marriage, perhaps they had no choice back in those days? But Samuel was the child born of that marriage, and what a blessing he was to Israel. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that God used Hannah's miserable situation to do a great work in Hannah and Israel.

Again both of these examples Deut 21:15 & 1Sam 1:4-6 highlight some of the problems that occur with polygyny, the natural preference of husband and the subsequent problems this causes. How sour was Abraham's household when Sara and Hagar were fighting? When you consider these problems will always arise in such situations it is no wonder that most countries have laws forbidding polygyny. How many women would put up with the suffering Hannah endured? God blessed her for her faith and perseverance but she is the exception-not-the-rule. Many men would fancy the thought of a harem but it comes with other costs that are much less appealing to say the least. I realize that this point has little or no bearing on second marriages in the context of this study, but it does help form a basic understanding of what goes on in any polygynous relationship.

The next polygamist of note would be David, he had multiple wives and his eye for women certainly got him into much trouble. He seemed to be ok until he got involved with Bathsheba. What began in adultery ended in a polygynous marriage, David was able to marry Bethsheba because her husband was dead. David had him killed. He would have fared much better if he had never gotten involved with her, but Solomon was the child born from that marriage and God used Solomon like none other. However once again we find like-father-like-son, and if David had an eye for women, Solomon had eyes bigger than his stomach.

1Kings 11:3 *And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.*

Wow! One thousand women! It is the most blatant disregard of the warning that Moses gave that could be imagined, and it comes as no surprise that this arrangement caused much problems for king Solomon. I suspect that Solomon had this many wives only for the sake of prestige and or lust, what kind of life would these poor women have had? The sad result speaks for itself.

But it would seem that not all children born of polygynous marriages repeat the practice. As far as I can tell Samuel only had one wife and he was the son of a polygamist. Joseph had only one wife even though his father had two wives and two concubines.

"The Husband Of One Wife"

The Apostle Paul often used the term, "*the husband of one wife*" (1Tim. 3:2, 1Tim. 3:12, Titus 1:6). We are told that because of these verses the New Testament forbids polygyny, I would contend that these verses forbid remarriage and polygyny for those men holding Church office. But for those men not holding Church office there is no specific prohibition against polygyny [except perhaps common sense]. I hasten to add that God's original model for humanity is one Eve for one Adam. I am not advocating polygyny but I believe that what Paul intended was that anyone holding an office in the Church must not be divorced and remarried. But nowadays we find that, "*the husband of one wife*" has been reduced to serial monogamy, or one wife at a time, i.e. remarriage is ok, just don't have two together. Hardly a high standard for a Bishop or a Deacon, in fact that is the same standard that most secular governments require of their citizens! [This point is best illustrated by J. Carl Laney in his book 'The Divorce Myth' page 96]

From this study we find at least three reasons why polygyny is not endorsed anywhere in the Scripture [in no particular order]:

- People like Esau indulge their lust using polygyny as a veil, this problem is largely hidden today with the arrival of serial monogamy.
- The natural preference of the husband and the resulting problems this causes in the relationships, i.e miserable marriage.
- The bad example it sets for all, and particularly for the children born from such practice, these children are likely to follow in the footsteps of their parents.

It's no wonder that polygyny has never been accepted as a practice in the Christian Church. Remarriage has gained wide acceptance but polygyny remains a strange enigma that some saints of old got away with, like biblical bandits the testimony of these men adds a dimension of complexity to this topic that is only rivaled [reflected] by human sexuality itself.

Summary

There is no endorsement for polygyny in the Bible, in fact those who had multiple wives usually suffered for it. It seems that it was the unwilling polygamists who came out most unscathed from the practice. Jacob never intended to have more than one wife, and David got involved in remarriage as an indirect result of Saul's stupidity. And no doubt that is precisely why some polygamists managed the practice well and others didn't. This type of complexity makes polygyny even less appealing particularly when attempting to formulate doctrine. And I suspect this topic is often left undone because it does get somewhat 'messy' when approached from a puritan point of view,

however I believe it is less messy than what is commonly presented as divorce and remarriage apologetics.

One caveat. To those men who are the victims of no fault divorce and would consider remarriage or who already are remarried I would say this:

1stly) Original marriage vows must be kept, if the first marriage vows forbid remarriage then don't remarry. Carrying the cross in these circumstances means living celibate. If you're not sure what your original marriage vows were, then ask the church or state representative that married you, they keep records.

Deut. 23:23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

2ndly) If you live in a country that has no fault divorce [almost all of the western world does] then I would encourage you not to remarry.

When attempting to write this summary I realized that the way it is presented in the New Testament is probably the best was to address this difficult subject.

Luke 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Mark 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

To those inquiring Christians who are involved in a second marriage, I would encourage you to consider prayerfully your situation against the examples above. This makes it clear that God hates divorce, and especially when it is done for the reason of remarriage. To those men who are the victims of this crime [divorce] I would encourage you to take heart from the fact that God hasn't ruled out all remarriage in the Bible. If history repeats then there will be circumstances similar to what happened to Jacob and David.

See Book Reviews for further reading on this subject:

For Men Only

The Exception Clause

The 'exception clause' in Matthew's Gospel (5:32 & 19:9) was given to men only and not to women. Deut.24:1-2 was also given to men only and not to women.

Even if you disagree with my interpretation of the exception clause, you must agree that it is only for men. And however you view Deut. 24 you must agree that it is only for men. There is no place in the Bible where a woman is granted provision to divorce her husband under any circumstances. None. There are good reasons for separation, and sometimes that is necessary, but there is no provision for divorce. The scriptures concerning divorce [and/or remarriage] are directed toward the men because the men are commanded to be the head of the family.

This important fact has been overlooked or avoided by most churches today, and the results are disastrous. Too many churches have formulated guilty party policies or statements on divorce and remarriage that ignore the differences between men and women and concentrate on the innocent [victim] and guilty [perpetrator] parties irrespective of gender. This sounds good on the surface but it ignores the important order that God has established. A major mistake. If the churches only kept the 'men only' context of the above mentioned texts the problems would be reduced. Why? Because more women initiate divorce than men as statistics show.

When a state or country has no fault divorce laws as most western countries do, [since about the 1970s - 80s.] it is always the women who are the main party when it comes to initiating a divorce, roughly 70% women and 30% men[1]. Extra incentive is provided by the Family Law courts for women to divorce their husbands in the form of big pay outs. If a wife is unhappy she can just get a divorce and chances are she will receive custody of the children and income and perhaps even the family home. The husband is often left with all the bills and none of the thrills, and little contact with his children. Hordes of women have gone down this path, betraying their families for their pursuit of happiness\lust\money\revenge\freedom or whatever. The churches are largely powerless against this evil because their own leadership is plagued with feminists, and they have a politicised version of biblical marriage.

Divorced Christian women all desire the coveted status of 'innocent party', for this purpose they require the services of a useful idiot [aka white knight]. A useful idiot is a cleric or someone who holds a church office to deem them suitable for remarriage. Sadly the churches have plenty of such dummies who are ready to come to their assistance.

If you are wondering why more women initiate divorce than men I think it can be explained by the way we are made, and the resulting bond we create when we marry. Consider the purpose of God, and the fallen state of humanity. God made man to serve Him, and God made woman to serve man. But when sin entered into humanity men no longer serve God, and women no longer serve men, both parties rebel against the purpose they were created for. Today's churches seem scared to even mention the order of God in marriage, and how the husband is called to be the head of the family, and the wife is commanded to submit to her *...own husband as unto the Lord*. Many of today's christian women despise the thought of submitting to their husbands, and want to wear the pants in the marriage, God's order is not for them.

Jesus said in Mark 10:12 *And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.* Paul also emphasised this point in his letter to the Corinthian church with the words 1Cor.7:39 *The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married...* And again to the Roman church Rom. 7:2 - 3 *For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress...*

Some folks immediately ignore these verses and begin to point out that Paul was only using the example in Romans as a comparison of how the law works, as if Paul stuffed up his doctrine! Then like a drowning man clutching at straws they try to explain away what Jesus said with a ridiculous interpretation of the exception clause. Torturing the text until it confesses.

Many have re-interpreted it to allow women to divorce and remarry, but there is not even one example in the Scripture of a woman who is divorced and remarried and accepted as wed before God. This point highlights an interesting fact.

There are many examples of men with multiple wives (David, Solomon, and Jacob) who are saved and yet maintained their many relationships; the same cannot be said for women. Why? Because God made us that way. A woman cannot maintain multiple sexual relationships (polyandry) and be considered morally sound, but a man can (polygamy). The advances of feminism in the church today are so great that few even dare to express such views.

* [1]'These boots are made for walking': why most divorce filers are women.
<http://www.unc.edu/courses/2010fall/econ/586/001/Readings/Brinig.pdf>

The Parable Of The Padlock*

The following analogy is a useful way to explain to girls how men think. Men understand how they think but girls don't, you may find this useful to explain to your daughter the virtue [necessity] of chastity.

Men are keys.

Women are padlocks.

If a single key can open many padlocks it is considered a 'Master' key [think Solomon]. Master keys are esteemed amongst keys as somehow better than the rest. [This might be 'carnal' thinking but most men think like this.] But a padlock that can be opened by any key is considered useless as a padlock, what man would entrust his valuables [emotions, kids, house, etc] to a padlock that any key can open! This kind of padlock cannot be given valuables, it is no longer a lock, it is only useful as a key receptacle.

It seems that "equality" is the unspoken sacred cow creeping through churches today. Even if you interpret the 'exception clause' to include adultery you must concede that it still only applies to men and not women. My how far we have come from the truth as revealed in Scripture.

In today's politically correct climate, to be gender specific is considered taboo, but the Scripture is always gender specific when dealing with the topics of marriage, divorce and remarriage. Unfortunately, many [most?] churches try to address these topics with an egalitarian view, but by ignoring the differences between men & women the resulting document will either contradict the Scripture or leaves the reader to draw their own conclusions. Not good. Nearly every church has some kind of a statement-on-divorce-and-remarriage or guilty-party-policy, included in the Westminster Confession of Faith is such an example.

Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 24. Of Marriage and Divorce.

10] "In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce: [11] and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead." [12]

The wording is not gender specific, and although it doesn't directly say: the-same-rules-apply-for-men-as-for-women, that is what it means. This egalitarianism always rings alarm bells and yet I see it again and again.

Red Flag Warning! Please note the use of the words party, spouse, or partner. These words are used repeatedly instead of husband and wife or man and woman. Let the reader beware. This is not how the Bible shows it. Often this approach is to appease feminist sensibilities deeply ingrained in christianity and western psyche. This type of document has been produced to maximise appeal and minimise offence. It is a plague in the protestant churches [all stripes] If you want to see some really common ground amongst opposing denominations just look at their divorce apologetics, they should reconcile like Herod and Pilate.

And indeed, many people and churches do use the same rules for men as for women in direct contradiction of the New Testament teaching. Now we see women divorcing their husbands and remarrying with the churches' blessing. Paul said otherwise; 1Cor. 7:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth. Please note; If the 'exception clause' must be interpreted in a generic fashion then divorce must be forbidden for men and women, not the other way around. Now it has become the easy way to recycle divorcees into adultery.

* The parable of the padlock wasn't written by me, I read it online [not sure where] and paraphrased it. The author is unknown to me.

Book Reviews

Holy Matrimony

by D.E.T. Evenhuis

D. Evenhuis' book 'Holy Matrimony' is the best book I have read on the subject of marriage. This book is the result of many years of faithful service to the Lord. The focus is primarily on marriage but also covers remarriage in detail, this book is not a dry theological work, but a vivid revelation of God's plan in marriage, it has truly unique content. This book is like no other that I have encountered on this subject, it will change the way you see marriage. Anyone interested in studying marriage from a biblical perspective will be blessed by this work. This book is available from www.holy matrimony.org, as a free pdf file. The first print has all sold out so there are no more hard copies available, only the pdf. Holy Matrimony was first published in 1997. It is now available as a free Ebook, here is the link: <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/813652>

Till Death Do Us Part?

by Joseph A. Webb

Joseph A. Webb's book, 'Till death do us part?' is also written from the betrothal-view [or espousal-view] perspective. And he is a great exponent of the permanence of the marriage bond. This book was first published in 1983 and despite his many critics this book is in its fourth printing, and Joseph A. Webb's message is needed more today than ever before. This book is a must for anyone wondering about second marriages. It is currently available from Amazon, and while your there check out some of amazing reviews about this book [Check it out](#)

Divorce and Remarriage

The Trojan Horse within the church

Joseph A. Webb

This book is a fitting sequel to 'Till Death Do Us Part'.

Joseph A. Webb is one of the pioneers of the betrothal view, and this book doesn't disappoint the reader. Joseph begins with some quotes from the early church fathers as compiled by the Rev. Stephen Wilcox and adds some pointed commentary. Joseph then digs into the history of divorce apologetics, and sheds some much needed light on its untidy origins, this alone makes this book a valuable resource in understanding how we are in such a mess. Notable quote; "The Church must come to a new awareness of the seriousness of a vow made to God" [page 110]. The book concludes with a challenge to the churches to choose whom to believe Jesus, the Apostles and the early church fathers or Erasmus?

Is is available from Amazon or Joseph's web site.

Marriage Divorce & Remarriage

by John Coblentz

This book was published in 1992 and explains the exception clause in the betrothal view. John calls it the “espousal view”, so now there are 3 different names for the same point of view. John Coblentz hails from the Mennonite church and I think this doctrine is well understood amongst the Mennonites although it doesn't seem to be their official position. There were 2 things that I enjoyed about this book in particular, firstly John's thoughts about the early church. And secondly John's courageous attempt to address the difficult questions that arise for people who are faced with the discovery that their second marriage is adulterous. This makes this book essential reading.

Remarriage Is Adultery Unless...

by David Pawson

David's honest approach to this subject is very refreshing. He doesn't mince words or cloud the issue when dealing with divorce and remarriage. David shares some of his depth of personal experience in this book making it both entertaining and accurate! A rare find these days. Page 42; "Few seem to realise the full implication of what Jesus was saying. Adultery is a sin committed by married people, when they engage in intercourse with anyone other than their spouse. This means that all those who have been divorced, however properly, are still married in God's sight." David Pawson. This book is available from David's web site [see links page] or from Amazon.

Except For Fornication

by Daniel R. Jennings

Daniel jumps straight into the Greek at the start of this book and if you enjoy Bible study you will enjoy this book. Daniel has done his homework and buttresses each point with a multitude of quotes from the early church fathers all the way to modern church history. Daniel demonstrates the meaning of the exception clause in the fornication view [betrothal view] with both theological and empirical evidence. I would hate to argue against this guy. This book is also available as a free download from Daniel's website [click here](#). It has some excellent quotes.

Thelyphthora Volume 1

A Treatise on Female Ruin by Martin Madan

This book is the most comprehensive work on polygamy I have seen. It is a reprint of the original text nearly 230 years old, and it uses the old letter 's' which looks like an 'f' this makes it a bit difficult to read. But it is well worth persevering with. Before I read this book I was suspicious that this might be an appeal to 'Man-up-and-marry-that-whore', but I was very wrong.

Martin Madan calls for a change in the legal system to penalise men that deflower girls and then forsake them. The damage done to these girls leaves them little option but to work as prostitutes and die early from disease. In his day there was a law against multiple wives, but no penalty for deflowering a girl and leaving her in ruin.

Madan presents a rock solid case for polygamy based entirely on the scriptures, and doesn't appeal to sentiment. He refutes many learned scholars of his day, and presents polygamy as a better alternative than the no penalty system for deflowering a girl. He claims it would greatly reduce the number of ruined women working and dying as prostitutes. I assume he is correct in this regard.

In the 230 odd years since this book was written the imbalance in the law that he [Madan] has highlighted has unfortunately been addressed in the worse possible way. Instead of correcting the laws to better reflect the laws of God, we have strengthened the laws to "empower women". The result is the destruction of the family. In Madan's day they had a system that destroyed girls, today we have a system that destroys the family. I would encourage anyone interested in this subject to read this book.

If I had to critique this book at all it would be on the the fact that he doesn't present the disadvantages of polygamy, and his interpretation of the exception clause. I strongly disagree with him on this point. This book can be purchased from Amazon.

Thelyphthora Volume 2

A Treatise on Female Ruin by Martin Madan

In volume 2 Madan picks up where he left off in Volume 1, and takes aim at Protestants, Catholics, Ecclesiastical courts and the Church Fathers for getting their marriage laws wrong. He critiques both the Council of Trent and the Marriage Act of 1753 [aka Geo11.C.33]. It is no surprise his views were rejected in his day.

At the start of volume 2 he sounds almost like a divorce apologist but without the egalitarian nonsense. His views regarding the roles of men and women are biblically correct.

He goes on to contrast the differences between 'Marriage-by-civil-contract' Vs 'Marriage-by-consummation', and shows how these 2 don't always scync together. And highlights how they can work against each other.

He demonstrates that neither the Old Testament priests or the New Testaments disciples were commanded to marry anyone. And berates the churches for making marriage a commercial interest, as if God had ordained them as some kind of essential third party.

On page 32-33 of Volume 2 He states that if a man marries a previously deflowered woman he commits adultery:

Quote from page 32 Volume 2: "Our laws and customs may be compared to the bill of divorcement, which put asunder those whom God hath joined together; so that if a man take a virgin, (not betrothed) and lie with her, he may put her away for every cause - **she may go and be another man's wife; and this, so far from being reckoned adultery, as be God's law it certainly is, is accounted a virtuous action; it makes her an honest woman, as the phrase is; such a marriage (though doubtless adultery, in the sight of God, in the man who by putting her away caused her to commit it - in the man who marries her who is so put away...**" Emphasis added

He makes this claim with little or no clarification. The law [Torah] states that if a virgin, who is not betrothed, is deflowered while she is under her father's house [jurisdiction], her father has power of veto regarding any union that she forms. So hypothetically: A virgin could be married [deflowered]

without a covenant/contract. And divorced without a certificate. Any woman in such circumstances carries all the baggage of a divorcee, but without the legal status.

Madan doesn't address the problems with his views, I am convinced he is wrong on his understanding of the 'exception clause', and I suspect he is also wrong regarding his position outlined above.

He also mentions that the women in the Turkish hareems [Seraglios] fare better than the women in the brothels of Western Europe, because the church got their laws wrong regarding polygyny.