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REMARriage AFTER DIVORCE IN TODAY'S CHURCH

THREE
VIEWS



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Remarriage after Divorce in Today's Church

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DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1: NO REMARRIAGE AFTER DIVORCE

1. What do you see as the strongest and weakest arguments for believing that the New Testament disapproves of remarriage after divorce? Why?
2. Can you give some specific examples of these arguments?
3. How can the church both affirm Jesus' standards for marriage and declare the forgiveness of sins?
4. Is it helpful to distinguish between tolerating an action and approving it? Why or why not?
5. Should higher standards of behavior be expected of church leaders than of laypeople? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. What can be done to make more marriages last? What advice would you give to young couples contemplating marriage? What advice would you give to the leaders of your church?
7. What changes in marriage discipline would you like to see in your church? Why? If you are content with the way things are at present, can you identify some reasons for your satisfaction?

CHAPTER 2: REMARRIAGE FOR ADULTERY OR DESERTION

1. Though this chapter argues that the marriage covenant is "dissolvable" or "breakable," do you think there is scriptural evidence that would suggest otherwise? Which, if

any, of the attempts in this chapter to harmonize Matthew's report of Jesus' teaching with Mark and Luke's exceptionless report make the most sense to you?

2. What are the pros and cons of using first-century socio-cultural background information found outside the Bible to help "fill in the gaps" for twenty-first-century readers who try to hear and understand the biblical text just the way a first-century reader would?
3. If sexual unfaithfulness throughout the history of human marriage is such a grave offense against the marriage covenant, what makes it possible for a spouse to forgive an unfaithful partner who genuinely repents of his or her sin? What circumstances would indicate that one has waited long enough for a spouse to repent?
4. What are the implications of Paul's telling those who divorce for invalid grounds to remain unmarried or else be reconciled (1 Cor. 7:10–11), while at the same time telling widows and widowers who cannot control their sexual desires that they should remarry (1 Cor. 7:8–9)? How would Paul counsel married couples who, for one reason or another, are physically unable to engage in marital relations?
5. How would you define "all reasonable attempts to save the marriage" when one's marriage covenant has been violated by a serious sexual sin or desertion? What role should church leaders play in coming alongside innocent victims of divorce, either to assure them that their marriage is irretrievably broken or to encourage them to hold on a bit longer in the hope of repentance and reconciliation?
6. If you are currently married, consider your relationship as a couple in the context of your larger family, church, community, work, and world. What do you need to continue to do, stop doing, or start doing to solidify the covenant loyalty you pledged to one another on your wedding day?
7. As a follower of Jesus today, how would you try to convey to your peers what Jesus taught about divorce and remarriage? How should the church encourage spouses

to keep their vows when marriages encounter threats of dissolution?

CHAPTER 3: REMARRIAGE FOR ADULTERY, DESERTION, OR ABUSE

1. For what grounds does the Bible explicitly permit divorce? What do these grounds have in common?
2. What other situations do you think are genuinely analogous to these kinds of exceptions?
3. Granted that there are exceptions, how do we work to prevent divorce? What principles in Jesus' teaching prevent us from excusing inappropriate divorce?
4. Why is it wrong to break up second marriages, even if the grounds for divorce were wrong?
5. How should we treat those who acted unjustly in breaking up their marriages yet have repented and done their best to make restitution?