

The Vincennes Voice

“...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight...” (Matt. 3:3)

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GOD’S TEACHING REGARDING MARRIAGE

Larry R. Ping II

God has been clear from the beginning regarding His thoughts about marriage. In Genesis 2:24 God said, “*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*” Jesus said in Matthew 19:5, “*For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.*” The apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:31, “*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.*” One should be impressed with the fact God has seen fit to include this marriage statement in each of the three periods of time. His law has not changed with respect to marriage.

Paul penned in Romans 7:2-3, “*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. 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.*”

these verses, he finds clear evidence of God’s Divine plan for marriage: One man is to marry one woman and they are to be bound for life. Any teaching other than this is patently false.

During the times of Jesus’ ministry, the Pharisees came asking “*Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause*” (Matt. 19:3)? Notice the question was not about remarriage, but purely about divorce. They wanted to know for what reason may one put away (divorce) his spouse. Jesus then goes on to explain in verses 4-6 what God’s plan had been since the beginning, culminating with “*Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*” From this statement, we can see the Christ’s answer to the Pharisees’ question was NO, it is not lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause.

Later, Jesus offered one exception to this Divine rule, “*fornication*” (Matt. 19:9, Matt. 5:32). We have brethren today who do not understand the meaning of one. One exception means one! No man has the right to loosen where God has not.

I Corinthians 7, one will find, upon reading the entire context, the teaching instructs the husband and wife to be and stay together, not the opposite, as some purportedly espouse. The following verses in I Corinthians 7 substantiate this (verses 5,10,11,12,13,27,39).

Paul is indicating in this chapter he wished all could be as he, unmarried and unfettered, so the work for the Lord could be more effective. The following verses in I Corinthians 7 teach this well (verses 1,7,8,32,34,35,37,38).

The text in I Corinthians 7 also indicates if one cannot be as Paul, it is not a sin to marry, and in marrying, keeps himself from sinning. These verses substantiate this (2,9,28).

As one then begins to paint the picture in I Corinthians 7, Paul wished that all could be as he. Understanding they cannot be, marriage is required to “*avoid fornication*” and “*sin.*” Those who marry must abide by the rule Jesus and God set up in Matthew 19:6, “*Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*”

When one combines

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Some teach, citing

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I Corinthians 7:10,11, what is commonly referred to as the "Pauline privilege." That is, Paul is allowing privileges Christ did not. The key words in these verses regarding this concept are "*But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried.*" Some take these words to mean that divorce is not a sin, and the only sin would be to remarry. This is false for several reasons.

1) One verse of Scripture does not undo another. Not understanding this, some twist God's Word making it teach something it does not (II Pet. 3:16). If Jesus taught there is only "one" exception, then there is only "one." Whatever I Corinthians 7:11 means and teaches, we know that it does not contradict Jesus.

2) If verse 11 teaches multiple, Biblically allowable reasons for divorce, then what are we to make of Jesus' statement in Matt. 19:6, "*Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*" What God says He means, and what He means He says! It is no different here.

3. If God "*hateth putting away*" (Mal. 2:16), why would he later inspire (II Tim. 3:16,17) that it is allowable to do so?

4. One who teaches the word "if" in I Corinthians 7 authorizes one to put away his mate for a reason other than fornication, must also admit that we are authorized to sin, seeing John wrote "*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*" (I Jn 2:1). Would the one who teaches multiple reasons for divorce accept that we have the right to sin?

I Corinthians 7:11 and I John 2:1 essentially have the same baseline of thought. John is not teaching us to sin, but in the event we do, we have an avenue through which to obtain forgiveness and salvation from that sin. Similarly, Paul is not teaching there are multiple reasons for divorce. Paul realizes that no matter how much teaching there is on the subject of marriage, there would be those who shirk Jesus' law. His teaching in verse 11 is instructions about what to do when one finds himself, sadly, in those situations, be "*reconciled*" or remain "*unmarried.*" Paul is in no way "authorizing" divorce as he employs the word "if." Paul is in every way directing those who may ignorantly or unwillingly find themselves in the state of having divorced or having been divorced for reasons other than fornication.

Proprietors of this false doctrine, as well as every false teaching, often run to the extreme and emotional arguments to make their point. Some cite physical abuse as an allowable reason for divorce. There are other, varied emotional and passionate stories that are woven in order to win those who are weak and unlearned in the ways of God (Eph. 4:14, Rom. 16:17-18). If what one teaches is according to the Word of God and is authorized by the Word of God, there is no need to stretch to these kinds of arguments and tactics. Peter penned, "*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen*" (I Pet. 4:11). A good Bible student will make his plea only to the Word of God, without adding to or taking away from it (Dte. 4:2, Prov. 30:6, Rev. 22:18,19). Only those who wish to go beyond that which is written (II Jn. 9-11) need to invent and develop these far-fetched, soul-condemning arguments. May we respect the Bible for what it says! May we teach what it teaches! May we live how it instructs, and leave everything else behind!

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm