



# **God Hates Divorce, But He Hates Some Marriages Even More**

Restoring Biblical Balance to the “God Hates Divorce” Message

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Restoring Biblical Balance to the God hates Divorce Message

By Michael Chriswell

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According to the mind of many legalists, there seems to be nothing that God hates more these days, than divorce. However, as evidenced by his supernatural help in my miraculous 777-day divorce, I know that God did not hate *my* divorce. The thing which God truly hated in my life, was my first marriage. In this book, I am going to show biblically why God hates marriages like my first one, more than He does the divorce which He allowed to rectify that.

Much of the “church” seems to be in a panic over the high amount of divorce among believers these days, but I think it’s important to consider that we are in a *very* different season of Christianity than the early church was. We are in the last days, a time when the great falling away is occurring and which affects far more marriages today, than when Christianity was newly born and in its high growth mode. Like the Corinthian church, who had their own marriage/sexual crisis (1 Corinthians 7:26), which we do not, we now have a marriage crisis which they did not. We are no longer in the high growth stages of authentic Christianity. We are approaching the days where Jesus asked if there would even be any faith among men by the time He comes back? (Luke 18:8). Unlike the legalists, I believe a great number of Christian divorces are happening today as a sort of preliminary separating of the tares from the wheat. Tares and wheat can grow together in the earth, but not in a marriage.

*Matthew 12:25 - “Every household divided against itself will not stand.”*

Turn on the news and you can see that God Almighty is shaking those things in creation which can be shaken (including marriages) so that only that which cannot be shaken may remain (Hebrews 12:27). I believe this is a very good thing which God is doing—Praise the Lord Almighty!

I am a divorced and remarried follower of Jesus Christ, who openly testifies that by God’s grace and His astonishing involvement in my own divorce, it became the single greatest spiritual blessing of my entire life so far. Jesus said a tree (a person, relationship, church, pastor, organization, event, ministry, life circumstance, etc.) is recognized by the fruit it produces. He went on to teach that a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit (Matthew 7:17-20).

This means we can measure everything in our life by this principle and we can discern if something is of God, the flesh, or the devil. When I reflect on the spiritual fruit which has been produced in my life and heart, through my own divorce, I can say with Jesus, “*This tree is indeed good.*” Nothing I have experienced in my life, not even the blessing of remarriage, has had more spiritual impact for good on me, than the horrible divorce that I went through with my first wife. More than eight years after the divorce, I continue to regularly express my gratitude to Father, for the very thing which many men look down on me for—my divorce.

*Job 1:21 – The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.*

My intimate walk with God, and the fruit He has produced in my heart and ministry, are all rooted in the suffering and humility I faced through a divorce, which I had begged God to prevent. Instead, it was God’s

plan to bring me to spiritual life and freedom through the death of my first marriage, a marriage which kept me in spiritual bondage. The legalist makes a terrible mistake of thinking that God sees all marriages, and all divorces the same, when in fact He does not.

My primary goal in writing this book is to bring some Biblical balance back to the topic of Christian divorce and remarriage, and to show Biblically that there are many “Christian” marriages which God hates even *more* than divorce. In fact, no different than when a new believer separates themselves from the darkness in the world, there are some divorces which God delights in because another child of His has been separated from the darkness in their spouse.

*2 Corinthians 6:14 - “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” Therefore, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”*

God’s first order of important business in the creation of the world was to *separate* light from darkness, *not* to join them together.

*Genesis 1:4 – “God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from darkness.”*

God’s desire for separating light from dark, is not exclusive to the physical creation story, but more importantly applies to every aspect of the spiritual life of a Christ follower. God still commands us to separate from darkness. In an unequally yoked marriage, there is often a spiritual tug of war between the spouses where one is pulling towards the light and the other towards the darkness. When that rope is consistently moving more to the darkness, that is a marriage which we can know that God hates.

*Acts 26:18 – “I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.*

This is not my opinion, or some heretical false teaching—It is right in the Bible, but no one in the mainstream ever teaches this! God has some very good reasons for allowing so many “Christian” marriages to fail, and it’s not just the devil ripping families apart like we’ve all been told. Many times, it is God doing the same good work He did at creation—separating the light from the darkness.

Our God is a Romans 8:28 God, and He can work all circumstances together for the good to those who love Him, but our God can also be put to the test, which we are not to do. Just because God can use, or has used, the darkness in your marriage, that does not mean that He does not still hate it, or that we should stay yoked to it after our eyes have been opened to how God feels about it. God used the darkness in Judas Iscariot to help put Jesus on the cross, but how did He feel about Judas? (See Matthew 26:24)

## **God Raises Up “Pharaoh’s” in Many Marriages**

Even though it was at least six years ago or more, I can remember the exact trail, the exact spot, and even the direction I was walking when God spoke to my heart something shocking. I was still in the thick of the divorce battle, and I had been praying passionately for God to soften my ex-wife’s heart so that her life could be useful and bring Him glory. Literally, as I was speaking that very sentence, I heard Him say in my spirit, as if He were walking on the trail right behind me, *“I already am using her for my glory.”*

At first, I was so confused, and I had no idea what He was talking about. This is another example of why we cannot lean on our own understanding and why God's ways and thinking are so much higher than ours. All I could see was a woman buried in hypocrisy, hate, and bitterness—a woman who spent her money and days trying to destroy me and to alienate me from my children. I also knew I was supposed to pray for my enemy, but within just minutes, the Spirit showed me that I was praying against God, in this situation, when I was praying for Him to soften her heart. And that's when God gave me insight on how He used the Pharaoh for his glory, by hardening his heart against God's children. Now, I understood that God was the one who had hardened my ex-wife's heart against me and that He was doing so for His glory. I didn't see how this was possible at the time, but I trusted Him. Today, we know the *rest* of the story and we can see through the video, *Trusting God in the Storm*, that He has indeed brought Himself glory all by hardening a heart against me! Our Father knows what He is doing!

*Joshua 11:20 – For it was the Lord himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel...*

*Romans 9:18 – Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.*

Another principle which the mind of a legalist cannot see is that many times God works against Himself, or even the good things He has done, in order to make himself known and to bring Himself glory. When God raised up the Pharaoh, to treat the Israelites harshly, and then sent Moses to do miracles and to warn the Pharaoh to let His people go, God turned right around and worked against Himself. He hardened Pharaoh's heart against the miracles which Moses did by His power. If you understand the story correctly, you can see that God is literally fighting against Himself on both sides. I have seen this principle at work all throughout Scripture, and in my own walk with the Lord. God does something good, and then He turns and works against it. His ultimate purpose is to make Himself known, feared, and trusted. (See Exodus 7:5, Deut 11:1-7)

*Exodus 4:21 - The Lord said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go."*

Pause, and really think about what is going on in this verse. God used His power, to perform miracles to convince the Pharaoh, but then He uses that same power to harden the Pharaoh's heart so that he will ignore the miracle and the warnings. This is God acting in a way that natural humans would never think to act. Who, in their right mind, would ever create something good, or act in a powerful way, and then turn and work against themselves in that very thing? Or, who would send a fallen angel (Satan) to earth to wreak so much havoc in your creation, and to strongly oppose your children's desire and ability to be in relationship with you? That makes no human sense at all! Human understanding says, "*why not just annihilate that fallen evil creature?*" By God creating Satan, then allowing him to fall, and then sending him to earth, God is again working against Himself in His goal of reconciling us back to him. What????

You, see, to God's amazing glory, He DOES NOT think and work like us! In the example of a Pharaoh and Satan, we can see vivid examples of what God said about himself through the prophet Isaiah.

*Isaiah 55:8 – "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

God raised up the Pharaoh, and Moses, by His power, and then He worked against them both by that same power. God also raised up the good institution of marriage, and yet oftentimes He raises up a "Pharaoh" to

work against that marriage by hardening the heart of one spouse. I saw this in my own marriage and divorce, where God raised up a “Pharaoh” to stand against my desire to worship and serve Him in a wholehearted manner. This is how I learned to walk by faith.

*“God has appointed opposition as an incentive to faith and holy activity.” – Mrs. Charles Cowman*

Although terribly painful and confusing to me, at the time, His glorious purpose was to make His name and tremendous Sovereign power known in my life and to several of those around me. God does not always see divorce and remarriage the way we do, or the way the legalists tell you that He does, and I want to show you this in the Bible. There is a lot of information to consider in this book, but please make every effort to read the entire book. The two most important points are at the end, and you could possibly be left to make a wrong choice, if you do not read them as well.

In this book, I’ll be addressing the following topics:

- Why it’s not surprising that men cannot agree doctrinally on divorce and remarriage.
- If God hates all divorce, then why does He allow so many Christian marriages to fail?
- The Hebrew word debate over sending away your spouse vs. divorcing your spouse
- What divorce and dinosaurs have in common biblically
- The missing “also writtens” that show there are marriages which God hates even more than divorce.
- Do we really know enough to judge every divorcee?
- Another reason God said He hates divorce
- The idolatry of marriage and blood family.
- Are all divorces the same in God’s eyes?
- God is NOT a legalist.
- The new covenant reality of spiritual death and it’s impact on divorce and remarriage.
- Considering remarriage
- Finding God’s personal will for your life.

If you listen to some of the popular *God hates divorce* messages today, you might be inclined not only to think that God hates *all* divorces, but also that marriage is the savior, and that the only hope for society and the church, is to keep these marriages together at all costs. You might also be led to believe that all marriages were put together by God, or that He could never possibly approve of, or use, a divorce for someone’s spiritual good. You may also believe that there is never an acceptable reason for remarriage outside of the physical death of your first spouse. You might even be led to believe something like the following, which is only one of several emails like this which I received while writing this very book.

*“My husband and I are Christians and we want to serve the Lord. We have both been divorced and we are now married. We know we committed adultery and have asked forgiveness. We no longer have sex because we don't want to commit a sin again. Both of our ex-spouses are remarried also. We were told the only way to not sin is to go back to our exes. Please help us to not break into adultery, what should we do?”*

In this book, I am addressing these out of balance teachings regarding divorce and remarriage, from the Bible. I will be sharing some illustrations, some basic Biblical reasoning, and some of my personal experiences in this book. However, every principle I share will be backed up with Scripture to show that these are not *my* opinions but are in fact the often-mysterious ways and thoughts of our Heavenly Father.

## **Doctrinal Division on Divorce and Remarriage**

I began writing a summary of the information in this book, as a part of my autobiography, but soon I realized it needed to be addressed more thoroughly so that people are not left confused. There are many Christians who feel lost, confused, and condemned by the many different teachings on these subjects. Finding the truth can be the difference between life and spiritual death for many.

I am a Christian who has been divorced and remarried. To some people, I am a man of God, while to others I am an adulterer living in sin and rebellion every single day with my second wife Persis. Just last night, I received an email from a man with the subject: divorce. The person wrote, “*you must read a different bible than I do. I pray for you. Sad to see you on your way to hell.*” I receive quite a few emails like this, and the Christians who believe that I am an adulterer are not just on the fringes. There are also some very respected pastors who believe this way, men like John Piper, David Pawson, and brother Zac Poonen.

I am no longer surprised by this. If well-known Bible teachers cannot even agree on the foundational doctrine of eternal security (“once saved, always saved”), it should not be surprising to us that so many cannot agree on God’s heart regarding the even more complex matters of divorce and remarriage. To know the truth in matters like these requires great personal humility before the Lord, remembering that He only shares the deep truths of His word with babes in Christ, not the wise and learned (See Luke 10:21).

It’s just as easy for a man to investigate the Scriptures and find passages that convince him there is nothing one can do to lose their inheritance of salvation, as it is for him to find passages that convince him that there is never a lawful time for remarriage, apart from the physical death of a spouse. When a man teaches that there is no way you can fall away from the grace of Christ and lose your salvation, to me he is teaching a terrible deception that probably leads more people to hell, than any other I’ve heard.

In my own confusion, years ago, I humbly went before Father and His word and found six common passages that lead people to believe you cannot ever lose your salvation. Then, I found *ten times* as many verses, a total of 64 warnings that show we absolutely can lose our inheritance of salvation, most of which men never teach on. If you are still confused on the eternal security doctrine, I recommend that you head over to [RelentlessHeart.com](http://RelentlessHeart.com) and download the free book, “Once Saved Always Saved?” under the BOOKS tab in the upper site menu. There, you can read the book I wrote which includes every major verse in Scripture on eternal security, and you can see for yourself what the Bible fully says on the subject, including what it clearly says about when we actually receive salvation, which may surprise many. If a man does not want to see the warnings against falling away, because he has buried his head underneath the other six, that does not make God’s heart on the matter go away in the other 64 passages.

In the same way, when a man teaches that *all* divorce, and *all* remarriage outside of the physical death of the other spouse, is a sin, I believe that same man is terribly wrong, and just like with the subject of eternal security, I will show that in this book with Biblical reasoning and lots of Scripture. You decide.

## **A Very Ironic Contradiction**

First, let me point out something curiously ironic here. I, Michael Chriswell, the one who is often accused of living in an adulterous relationship with my wife Persis, do believe that I can absolutely lose my salvation. I believe it is easily possible to fall away from grace, by neglecting to take seriously the warnings of God in those 64 passages of Scripture.

How ironic then, that the majority of the same men who would say I am living in sin with Persis through my remarriage, are the same exact men who also teach so fervently that it is impossible for me to ever lose my salvation or to fall away from grace (Zac Poonen is the exception, who believes you can indeed fall away from grace and lose your salvation). Think about what double mindedness this must be from Father’s

perspective. A preacher who believes that I'm an adulterer through remarriage, but then indirectly teaches that I should not worry because I can do absolutely NOTHING to ever lose my salvation.

Then, to reconcile their two drastically opposing views here, they must teach that the reward I will lose for living in adultery is not my eternal life, but simply some blessings here on earth and some rewards in heaven later. What nonsense! Hear this from *my own* words, if I, Michael Chriswell, am willfully, knowingly living in adultery, which has not been repented of, I will hear, "*depart from me into eternal condemnation*" upon my death. I will not simply lose some heavenly rewards or God's earthly blessings. The Bible says, I will lose my eternal life because I cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, which means the only place left for my eternal soul to dwell will be in hell. What deception to teach that I could live in adultery and still not lose my salvation. What does the Bible clearly say which refutes this false teaching?

Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-30, that even if I commit adultery in my heart by lusting after another woman, I will be in danger of the fire of hell. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:9 that if I am an adulterer I will never inherit the kingdom of God. These truths that cannot be twisted or ignored, except to one's own destruction.

Do you see the irony here? I'm sure you would agree, one of us is very wrong. To clear up some of this confusion, let's start back at the beginning and see why God said He hated divorce in the first place. Then, let's go back and look at some of Christ's and Paul's most popular teachings on these subjects, where I will point out something very important that many of us fail to understand about them.

## **If God Hates Divorce, Then Why Does He Allow So Many Marriages to Fail?**

I'm not an advocate for divorce and remarriage, and I know there are many foolish and sinful unions taking place out there, which should not. I believe in staying married for life, as far as it is up to you, but we must remember that it takes two people to make a marriage, and only one to end it in divorce. From my personal experience, and study of God's word and heart, I know that Satan is not the only one ending marriages.

Despite much prayer, strong faith, and patient endurance while clinging to His promises, God is still allowing the marriages of many professing Christians to collapse in divorce. It happened to me after I pleaded with God to save my marriage and to change my her heart. I even cried out in prayer that He could not answer any of my other prayers, if He would only answer the one prayer to rescue her heart.

God is Sovereign, and He can stop any divorce He wants to, so why are there so many that He doesn't stop? Before we answer that question, let's first look back and see why God said He hated divorce. We can read in Malachi 2:14-16 where He explained to the Jews that He hated divorce because He desired godly offspring, and because the Jews were breaking faith with their wives and dealing with them treacherously.

*Malachi 2:14-16 New American Standard Bible (NASB)*

*... The Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the Lord of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."*

There are several interpretations of this passage regarding who it is referring to when it says, "*what did that one do while he was seeking godly offspring*", and what the word "*garment*" means. But, let's not get lost in those words, or strain out gnats and swallow camels to justify ourselves. Instead, I want us to consider

the practical motive of God's heart here. But first, let me address the teaching which says what God hates is not actually *divorce*, but rather the "sending away" of a spouse without a proper divorce certificate.

There are a few videos I have been sent on YouTube, from people who are lovingly trying to defend me as a divorced minister of God's word, when they see others calling me an adulterer. The videos they send me are of men teaching that the Bible doesn't say that God hates *divorce*, but that He hates *shalach* the Hebrew word which means *sending away*. The videos imply that sending away your spouse without a certificate of divorce, which would then make them an adulterer if they remarry, is what God really hates, not the proper sending away with a divorce certificate.

Their teaching often references Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and suggests that Jesus was not doing away with that law which was already established by Moses, but that it was only a new warning to not send away a spouse without a certificate of divorce, or you will be sinning. I appreciate the sincere love and concern others have had, to send me these teachings, but I believe this is a false teaching which many are using to ease their conscience, or to justify their own divorce and remarriage in ungodly ways. I believe this confusion is easily cleared up by looking at what divorce and dinosaurs have in common biblically.

## **What Divorce and Dinosaurs Have in Common Biblically**

The word divorce is like the word dinosaur in that they are both man-made words which didn't exist at the time of the writing of the Bible. Nevertheless, in Job chapters 40 and 41, God speaks of several creatures which today we call *dinosaurs*, and the Bible speaks in several places of sending away a spouse, which today we call *divorce*.

The word divorce was not created until the 14<sup>th</sup> century, long after the original Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic manuscripts of the Bible were written. Nevertheless, the divorce act is almost as old as marriage itself. I contend, as many Bible scholars have also done, that when God uses the words "send away", He means exactly what today, we call divorce. I have never heard of a single person in my life who said, regarding the end of their marriage, "*I have just sent my spouse away, or my spouse sent me away.*" If someone used those words with me, I would presume they sent them away on a nice vacation, or for some rest. In contemporary language we use the word divorce to describe the action of "sending away".

In the days of Malachi, when a man *sent away* his wife, he was *divorcing* her, but it would have been a much simpler process than going through the legal divorce court processes we have today. It would have looked and felt much more like a simple sending away. In Genesis 16:3, Sarai, gave Hagar to Abraham to be his wife. Then, with God's permission, Abraham *sent away* Hagar and Ishmael (See Genesis 21:8) and you can see that they were sent off early in the morning and perhaps by noon, they were considered *sent away*. However, today divorce is a profitable business and it can be a process of months, if not years, of back and forth legal gymnastics fighting over children and possessions.

By the way, Ishmaelites are another example of God working against Himself. It is well understood that the Arab and Muslim people have descended from Ishmael. This was God's doing and just look at how God has used the Arab people to work against Jews and Christians. This is why I do not fret about "muslims taking over the world", because God told Hagar that He was going to make the descendants of Ishmael too numerous to count. Just like the Pharaoh, God Himself raised them up. Then look how God described the way the Ishmaelites would live.

*Genesis 16:12 – He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers.*



Isaac is the Father of the Jews, and Ishmael is the Father of the Arabs. Do you know of any two people groups who despise each other more? I digress...back to divorce.

In the days of Malachi, being *sent away* (divorced) would place excessively difficult adversities on the wife, who now no longer had a home or daily sustenance. She would now have to provide her own welfare as a previously married woman. Imagine how hard it might be for her to travel safely back to her hometown and family, even if she could? We see a Biblical example of this again with Hagar in Genesis 21 as she ran out of water after being sent away and then she placed Ishmael under a tree to die. It was so treacherous that it took the intervention of an angel of God to save them.

Being *sent away* in those days was indeed treacherous, versus in developed countries today where there are lots of safe travel options and ample resources of help almost everywhere. Just the other day, I stood behind a single mom buying all her groceries with checks from the government, who was also likely living in housing subsidized by the government. This type of welfare did not exist in the time of Malachi. Therefore, when a man so callously sent his wife away, divorcing her for foolish reasons, with or without a certificate, God saw that He was putting her very life in danger, which God hates. This goes against God's character, will, and righteous command to love and care for one another. Abraham marrying and sleeping with Hagar was foolish, but Him divorcing her was not for a foolish reason. It was in accord with the corrective plans and purposes God had for his life, which is why God blessed both he and Hagar even after the fact. I wonder if the legalists have ever considered the fact that the father of our faith is a divorcee? That being the case, I wonder if Abraham was around today, how many churches would let him speak?

The "sending away" teaching indirectly suggests that I can now divorce Persis if she displeases me in some way, and that I can still be good with God, and that I can prevent her from becoming an adulteress upon her remarriage, if I simply give her a legal certificate of divorce vs. just sending her back to India without one. Is there any part of your spirit that knows that is simply not true in the heart of Jesus? My friend, if I did that, I tell you the truth, I would be sinning against God, and if I remarried after divorcing her for some foolish reason, I would indeed be guilty of adultery.

It is crystal clear in Matthew chapters 5-7, that Jesus brought an even higher standard of righteousness than what the Jews had under the old covenant law on every one of the subjects he taught on, including divorce and remarriage. In the new covenant, you are guilty of murder if you harbor anger against your brother, and you are guilty of adultery if you harbor lust for another person. You don't have to commit either of those physically, but only in your heart and God will hold you guilty.

Let me be clear here for those who don't yet understand this. God does not condemn a person because they had some angry thoughts come into their mind against their brother or sister, or because a lustful thought which comes from seemingly nowhere into his mind. It is when a Christian harbors those thoughts, feeds them, or entertains them in his heart, that He is in danger of condemnation. If you hate your sin and you keep fighting against it, you are on the same side as God. If you give evil and sin safe harbor in your heart and mind, you are an enemy of God and his wrath is aimed at you (Colossians 3:6). I like the analogy Warren Wiersbe gave when he said, "*you cannot stop a bird from flying over your head, but you can keep it from building a nest on it*". In the same way, you cannot stop flaming arrows of temptation to be shot at your mind, but you can keep them from starting a full-fledged fire of evil desire, which you later act upon.

Back to the point. Shall we try to say that Jesus raised the standard on all the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, except divorce? No, look at Matthew 5:31-32 and you will see that Jesus raised the bar on divorce too, even addressing the certificate of divorce issue.

*Matthew 5:31-32 NIV "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery."*

Again, the false teaching about this passage tries to suggest that Jesus is not speaking of a legitimate divorce where there has been a certificate given, but rather a man who sends his wife away without one, which technically means she would still be married. However, the heart of Jesus' teaching against divorce has absolutely nothing to do with our having simply missed the true meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words used, such that we now need to distinguish the difference between God hating what we call divorce, versus what the Bible calls *sending away*. My friend, when we start dissecting every little word and splitting hairs in the original Greek or Hebrew, we are almost certainly on our way to *divorcing* our own self from God's truth. We will become one of those who strains out gnats and swallow camels, just like the teachers of the Law and Pharisees. It's ironic, but you can be too clever, too smart, too studied, and look too deep, and you will miss the heart of God in what you are studying. Jesus Himself pointed this principle out in Matthew 11:25 when He said, "*I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.*"

Look at what happened to the expert in the Law in the parable of Luke 10, about the good Samaritan. When the expert heard Jesus use the word, *neighbor*, the man immediately wanted to justify himself by asking *who is my neighbor*. In other words, how exactly is *neighbor* defined so that I know who I have to help, and who I can get away with not helping? People foolishly do this all the time, splitting hairs with words to justify themselves by asking, "*what really is porneia, or sexual immorality, what really is lukewarmness, what really is unforgiveness, what really is turning the other cheek, what really is Shalach or divorce?*", etc. We must be very careful to avoid the temptation of trying to justify ourselves with this clever word scheme of our flesh. The heart is deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9).

Jesus was not teaching that a man must not "send away" his wife without a divorce certificate. On the contrary, Jesus is making it clear to *those* Jews, that it is clearly a sin to send away your wife through divorce for any and every reason, except for marital unfaithfulness. Jesus did not come teaching, "*Be sure to give your wife a certificate if you want to send her away,*" but rather, "*Be sure not to send your wife away for any reason other than marital unfaithfulness*".

This teaching of Jesus, to the Jews of that time, also applies to us Gentile believers. However, it could almost be said that for many of us, like myself, it is not necessary to have been taught with the same emphasis in which it was taught to those Jews. Why? Because they had a serious imbalance in their belief and practice about divorce that most of us Christians today, do not. Look at the specific question they asked of Jesus and we can see what was going on in their hearts and regarding divorce, and the specific issue which Jesus was addressing.

*Matthew 19:3 - Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"*

How many people do you know that think it's ok today to divorce their wife for burning the toast or not making enough tasty food? I'm confident that I've heard more divorce stories than many people because of the public nature of my own divorce story and ministry, but never once have I heard of someone divorcing someone for something that petty, and never once have I had anyone ask me what the Pharisees asked Jesus? This wouldn't be the case if I had lived back then when Jesus was giving this very teaching. Perhaps I might have known many people who divorced for similar reasons, and as a result Jesus' teaching would have been very relevant to me personally as a warning. As you will see, God has said many more things on divorce, other than just what Jesus spoke to *those* Jews who had *that* imbalance. If we are to know the whole counsel of God on marriage and divorce, we must look at the *also writtens*.

## Missing the “also writtens”

I had just started writing Chapter 21 of my autobiography, where I was now claiming that God gave me a supernatural sign showing me that it was His will that I would one day be married again. This promise came in November of 2010, just three months after my first wife left and filed for divorce because I was no longer willing to be a slave to the upper-middle class American lifestyle we had achieved. Instead, I wanted to stop serving money as my master, and to follow Christ with all my heart. I pleaded with her to come along with me, but she refused, being instead satisfied with her external form of godliness and hypocrisy.

A great responsibility of a Christian is to attempt to ascertain, by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, how God feels about the circumstances and situations we face in life, so we can act in accordance with God's will in that matter. We are to be imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1), and in order to do so we have to know His mind on a matter correctly. When we think and act like God, we have harmony and peace in our relationship with Him. When we do not think and respond like God, we are at enmity with God and likely others. Like the prophet Isaiah wrote, “*We all like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.*” A.W. Tozer believed those words are the greatest definition of sin ever written. When we go our own way, we sin against God.

I became tired of *going my own way* and instead chose God's way. When my first wife did not want to take God seriously with me, it was because she wanted to continue going in her own way. Not only that, but she tried to prevent me from following God's will for my life. If going our own way is the root of sin, how much more must God hate it when we try to get others to follow our own way, and not His? Here are just a few Scriptures that show us God's mind on things like this.

*Mark 6:11 – If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them.”*

*Matthew 8:22 – But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”*

*Matthew 12:25 – “Every household divided against itself will not stand.”*

*Matthew 12:30 – He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.*

When Jesus says, “*He who is not with me, is against me*”, He is saying that person is an enemy. If the Spirit of Jesus Christ lives in me, and then someone stands against His purposes and call in my life, God clearly sees that person as an enemy. No amount of preaching on tolerance, patience, or love can erase or change the mind of Christ on this matter. The Scripture is already written, and God's unchanging mind has already been revealed on a matter like this. When someone is standing in Christ's way in your life, even if He has temporarily allowed it to happen (again working against Himself), that person is nonetheless an enemy of God, and will remain so unless God grants them repentance. We can see how serious this is by reading what the Spirit spoke through Paul to a man who was standing in the way of another man's faith.

*Acts 13:8-11 The proconsul...wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.*

Think about what we just read and realize that God still feels this same way when a person stands in the way of someone else's faith and desire to follow God's will for their life. God blinded Elymas' physical eyes, just as he put Ananias and Sapphira to physical death, as part of creating reverence and fear of His

name in the early church. However, when people stand in His way today, God more often blinds people spiritually, which is worse by far (John 9:39)! If you believe Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8), then you can understand that God felt the same way about my ex-wife as He did Elymas, “*a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right.*”

I wanted to do God’s will, not my ex-wife’s; This is why He was pleased to separate me from her through divorce, and why He was pleased to tell me that I would one day be married again. If you are following along in my autobiography, you will hear the astonishing story of how five and a half years after God confirmed that for me, He gave me Persis to be my second wife, in a way that only He could do.

However, for many Christians, they can’t possibly believe God would do something like that, and in accordance with their interpretation of Scripture, I’m living in adultery every single day because my ex-wife is still *physically* alive. They most often justify their position by quoting the following two verses.

*Malachi 2:16 “I hate divorce,” says the Lord God of Israel.*

*Luke 16:18 “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.”*

Blind to the principles I shared earlier, about why Jesus specifically taught this point to the Jews, they go on to teach that the only way for me to get right with God is to divorce Persis and get back with my ex-wife. To show you how absolutely ignorant this type of thinking is, let’s try to imagine that Elymas the sorcerer was married to a Christian woman, but then divorces her for her faith in Christ. God eventually blesses her with a believing husband, but when she goes to “church”, the pastor tells her that the only way for her to not end up in hell is to divorce her believing husband and go back and remarry Elymas. Now, with this scenario in mind, please go back quickly and re-read that passage from Acts 13:8-11 and try to imagine what I just proposed happening. If God gives you understanding, you will see why this is among the most spiritually ignorant thinking I have ever heard in my entire ministry. The people who are teaching this nonsense are failing to see the “*also writtens*” in Scripture, which is why there is so much confusion and legalistic condemnation on this subject. Spiritual blindness abounds!

In Matthew Chapter 4, when Satan said to Jesus, “*it is written*” and then quoted scripture from Psalm 91 to Jesus during his temptation in the desert, he was indeed quoting a verse of truth from the Word of God. He did leave off the last part of the verse he quoted from Psalm 91:11, but Jesus never challenged him on that point. Instead, Jesus replied to him by saying, “*It is also written*”. The devil was quoting a true principle from Scripture, but He was missing the *also writtens*. There was more to God’s heart on that situation than the verse he was quoting to Jesus from Psalm 91:11-12. What a wonderful incentive to read the entire Bible slowly and carefully, knowing that God rarely left the whole truth in any one verse. The legalists are acting just like Satan, when they say “it is written” and then quote a true passage on divorce. We must be able to turn to them in boldness, like Christ did to Satan, and exclaim, “*It is also written...!*”

Considering this encounter between Satan and Christ, we can see an example of the Holy Spirit’s warning through Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:6 when he said, “*The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*” Are you able to see that if Jesus simply followed the Scripture which Satan had quoted to him, indeed the letter would have killed in that scene? Can you imagine how many people act on Scriptures which Satan has quoted to them, only to experience tragedy? Christ knew that was not God’s full counsel because He knew the *also writtens*, and as a result, He was led to the most glorious life which resulted in eternal life for all his disciples.

Indeed, God hates divorce, in accordance with what we just read in Malachi 2:16, but if we take the time to find and read the *also writtens*, we will see that He hates some marriages even *more* than He does the divorce which will rectify the marriages which He hates. God does not see all marriages and divorces the

same. We have a prominent example of this in Ezra chapter 10, where the very God who said he hates divorce, orders the largest mass divorce I've ever heard of. Go read that chapter and then try to imagine that some legalist came running into that scene yelling, "No, no, no...don't you all understand that God hates divorce...this cannot be from God...It is written, what God has joined together, let no man separate."

If these things really were said in that scene, how might God have responded? Based on several more *also writtens*, which I will show you later, I can say confidently that we would have likely heard God say something like this, "I hate these marriages much more than the divorces which will rectify why I hate them, and let no man dare say that I have put these marriages together. I did not put these marriages together, they did, and not by my Spirit."

God makes it clear in many Scriptures, that not all marriages, or alliances, are from Him, and most of them today are not because so few are truly walking with God and receiving His personal guidance for their life. So, let's not allow it to be said that all the marriages we see from professing Christians today have been joined by God. God permitting something to happen, does not equate to Him making something happen, or approving of something. Millions of professing Christians start ministries, businesses, projects, plans, friendships, and yes even marriages, which God never asked them to, or approved of. They are started by the evil and corrupt desires within the will of man, not by the righteous Spirit and will of God.

*Isaiah 30:1 "Woe to the obstinate children," declares the Lord, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin."*

Shall we try to say that in Ezra chapter 10, God was having a bad day, or is it possible that the God who is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow (Heb 13:8), still feels the same way about many marriage unions which were not done of His Spirit, and which lead His true children astray from their faithfulness to Him?

There are only three words in the entire Bible, written in Malachi 2:16, which read "I hate divorce", but there is an entire chapter, and several other passages written about marriages the Lord hated even more than He hates divorce. By reading the *also writtens* we can see that God hates the unfaithfulness of his people and their spiritual death, which often occurs from unequally yoked unions, even more than He hates a divorce that will change that. Paul reminded us of this important principle and God's own words on the matter in 2 Corinthians 6:14, when he wrote the following.

*"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."*

Think of how many disastrous marriages could have been prevented if people simply followed that one command of God. It is either a failure to find and read the *also writtens*, or outright spiritual blindness that causes people to say I should get back with my unfaithful and hypocritical ex-wife! They are the same people who would have been standing on the sidelines of that Ezra chapter 10 story yelling, "You must not put away these foreign wives and children of yours...God hates divorce...go back to them!" Perhaps they would have said the same thing to Abraham as he was sending off Hagar and Ishmael, even though God had a very good reason for allowing this. Let me show you what a deception this type of thinking is by using an extreme illustration.

Let's suppose I was first married to a woman who openly became a worshipper of Satan and who also tried to convert me to Satan worship and turn me away from Christ. Would Jesus expect me to never separate

from that person through divorce? 1 Corinthians 7:12, written by the Spirit of Jesus, through Paul, says I should not divorce my unbelieving spouse **IF...IF...IF** she is *willing* (NASB – *consents*) to live with me. I placed three “IF’s” in there so that you can see that *my not divorcing* my unbelieving spouse is conditional upon her *willingness and consent* to live with me. What if she is not *willing* to live with me? What is the reciprocal of that command, if that condition of willingness and consent is *not* met? I can divorce her.

First, let’s ask how does God define the words “unbeliever” and “willingness”? Some people openly resist Christ and persecute their believing spouse. However, according to Titus 1:16, there are others who go to “church”, and who profess faith in Christ with their lips, but who then deny Him by their actions. Are they to be counted as believers according to God? No, Paul calls these people false brothers or sisters, and Jesus called them tares among the wheat. Most of the time, a false believer, also referred to in Scripture as an Ishmael, a goat, or a tare, is usually far more dangerous than an unbeliever.

No one was spoken of in the Bible more harshly, by God, than the false or hypocritical believers. Recall how Jesus spoke to the hypocrites in Matthew 23, calling them a brood of snakes, blind fools, hypocrites, whitewashed tombs, full of dead men’s bones. Recall how Stephen spoke to the Sanhedrin and Jews in Acts 7:51-53 saying, “*you stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears!*” Recall how Peter spoke to Simon the Sorcerer, a false believer, in Acts 8:20-23, saying, “*May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money. You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right with God.*”

Would I dare go back to Jesus, or Stephen, or Peter in those scenes and say, “*You guys are out of line...you need to love your enemy and love is patient, love is kind, love makes no record of wrongs and love never fails?*” Hopefully I would not, because God would make a fool out of me in that moment. God *always* hates, and *always* opposes the hypocrites, and He is *always* working to separate light from darkness. God is love, and God is Holy, and God is Just, and God is Good and righteous in all that He does!

Now, what if you were married to someone who God calls a snake, a blind fool, a whitewashed tomb, a stiff-necked rebel, or a hypocrite? Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:14 that an unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believing spouse, so, does that mean that God looks the other way on these types of people if they are married to a believer? Is the *marriage card* a pass for them to continue to live in that wickedness and rebellion against God if they stay married to a believer? Will they go to heaven even if they don’t believe in Christ, simply because they are married to a believer? I do not believe this is what Paul means *at all*.

I believe there is a big difference between someone who does not believe in Christ, but who lives in peace with their believing spouse, versus a wicked person who antagonizes or persecutes the believing spouse, like an Elymas, whom the Holy Spirit said was an “*enemy of everything good*”. When Paul writes that the unbeliever is sanctified through the believer, so that the children aren’t unclean, I believe this is only a temporary stay of God’s judgment for that unbelieving spouse, perhaps a grace period for them to possibly come to faith. It does not mean they will be saved because two verses later, in 1 Cor 7:16, Paul says of the unbelieving spouse, how do you know if you will save them or not? Based on many other Scriptures we will look at, I believe this sanctification only applies to an unbelieving spouse who is willing to live with the believer in peace, not a wicked antagonist. I think this will become clear when we look more closely at what Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 7:12, regarding the *willingness* of the unbeliever to live with the believer.

Now, let’s consider how God defines the concept of *willingness*, as it relates to an *unbelieving* spouse’s willingness to live with the believer. Does He consider my spouse living with me, under my roof, in any manner of character, wickedness, or unbelief to be her *willingness*? In other words, does willingness mean that if she is willing to live in the house with me physically, then *nothing* else matters? What if she vehemently opposes my Christian faith like the Pharisees did to Jesus? Is that willingness? What if she relentlessly persecutes me for my faith, or my lifestyle in Christ? Is that willingness? What if she stands

against the things God asks me to do? Is that willingness? What if she physically abuses, or emotionally manipulates me to do what she wants rather than what God wants? Is that willingness? What if she tries to pull me to her world view, or her worship of pagan gods, her false religion, her love of the occult, her atheist beliefs, or her love of money or the comforts of the world? Does God consider these things to be her *willingness* to live with me as a follower of Christ? What about an unbelieving spouse who uses drugs, or watches porn, or spends money frivolously, or leads the family into harm's way, or even physically abuses his wife? Does God say to that wife, "*Do not dare divorce him because he has not had physical sex with another woman yet, which makes him still faithful, plus he is clearly still willing to live with you.*"?

We don't have to guess about this answer because there are plenty of scriptures among the missing *also writtens* which show us God's heart on these matters. I believe therefore God has made provision in 1 Corinthians 7:12, for some to end a marriage in situations like this, and that is why He does not consider any of the above situations, or similar ones, to be the *willingness and consent* of an unbeliever, such that you should not divorce them. Just three verses later (7:15) Paul explains, through the Holy Spirit, that God has called us to *live in peace* and we already know from another *also written*, in 2 Corinthians 6:15, that there is no harmony or *peace* between Christ and Belial, or between the wheat and the tares, the sheep and the goats, the Isaac's and Ishmaels, the child of God and the children of the devil, or the light and the dark.

Paul says, let your unbelieving spouse stay if they are *willing* because you do not know if you will save them or not. If you have an unbelieving spouse and things aren't going so well in your marriage, but there is relative peace in your home because they are willing to let you live and serve God the way He has called you to, the answer is clear, DO NOT DIVORCE them. Instead, simply trust God for His Sovereign will.

Only God knows if your unbelieving spouse will ever come to faith, but clearly the majority do not become true followers of Christ, as evidenced by obedience to His words (John 8:31-32). Having personally been contacted by thousands of people in unequally yoked marriages, I can tell you that it is very rare for both spouses to become true followers of Christ, especially in these last days. God knows this, which is why He made provision for this situation through Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 7, when one spouse is not willing to live with the believer.

A true Christian will feel compassion towards their unbelieving spouse and have hope for their conversion, but that does not mean that a Christian should stay yoked to an unbelieving spouse who violently opposes their faith and creates constant discord. Many times, that also ends in the spiritual death of the believing spouse. God is still doing the work of separating light from darkness, and He commands us to also separate from the darkness in our lives. The devil is still working hard to yoke the darkness to our light to put it out.

*"Divide and conquer" is the cynical slogan of Machiavellian political leaders, but Satan knows how to unite and conquer. Power lies in the union of things similar and the division of things dissimilar. Maybe what we need in religious circles today is not more union but some wise and courageous division. Everyone desires peace, but it could be that revival will follow the sword.*" – A. W. Tozer

In high spiritual conflict marriages, where there is no peace, Jesus often brings the sword (Mat 10:34) and says to the believing spouse, "*Come follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.*" As you will see later in this book, we should not be surprised when God runs off an unbelieving spouse, or when He gives us permission to divorce a spouse who is stubbornly standing in His way and preventing His will from being done in the believing spouses' life. I can testify to Tozer's assertion because great personal revival followed the sword which Christ brought into my first marriage. Hallelujah!

Oh, how hard this is for people to accept because so many of us have been indoctrinated by legalist teaching on this subject. Why do we still ignorantly believe that the temporary earthly institution of marriage nullifies God's work and command to separate the light from the dark? Why do we foolishly believe that

the darkness and light can cohabitate, as long as it is done in a “magical box” called marriage? How can a man or woman consecrate themselves to God while being yoked to the darkness? They cannot! Regardless of what legalism is teaching, we cannot throw away all of God’s commands to separate from the wicked and disobedient, without severe eternal consequences, even inside of a marriage. If the pastors who preach this out of balance “God hates divorce” message could spend about 6 months reading through all the marriage and divorce emails I’ve received, many of which have ended in spiritual death, they would change what they are ignorantly preaching!

If we come to the words of God, through Paul, like a humble child, we can see the simple truth and then walk in it. **The teaching of Paul is so clear—if my unbelieving spouse is not willing to live with me in peace, I then have the right to divorce her.** Paul did not say, as the legalists do, do not divorce the unbeliever under *any* circumstances. He said do not divorce the unbeliever **IF** they are willing to live with you. Someone may say, “*But what about Jesus saying do not divorce for any reason other than adultery?*” (Matthew 19:1-9) I am going to answer that question shortly after we take a look at the *also writtens*.

Churchianity, which teaches that faith in Christ will unite your whole family and bring a solid bond of love to every marriage, is not true Christianity, as evidenced by 2000 years of Christian history and testimony. Jesus himself taught that He did not come to bring peace between family members and friends, but a sword, and that a man’s enemies would now become the members of his own family, as a result of their faith in Christ (Matthew 10:34-38). Our Lord also taught that every household divided against itself cannot stand. He did not say, might not stand, but *cannot stand* (Matthew 12:25). Are these teachings of Christ also nullified by the temporary earthly institution called marriage? No, they are not, as we will see soon.

## **The Marriages Which God Hates More Than Divorce**

Having identified earlier that Jesus was speaking about divorce to a specific group of people, who were experiencing a specific imbalance in their belief and practices of it, we must now see that this was *not* God’s entire counsel on divorce and re-marriage. It is also important to remember that Jesus’ teaching on divorce presupposes the marriage union is between two Jews who love and fear God, two believers if you will.

Please remember that in the sermon on the mount, Jesus is not addressing the types of marriage issues that I am addressing in this book. Jesus was not speaking to Jews who were going to be a part of the great falling away we see today, where perhaps millions of marriages are being impacted.

I am primarily writing about being unequally yoked to someone who refuses to believe in Christ, or who is a false believer in Christ, and who is then used of Satan to try to pull you into their darkness and away from your own faithfulness to God. These types of marriage/divorce principles are addressed by God in other *also writtens* throughout Scripture, not by Jesus.

Again, let us remember that God has not changed in His holiness or in His righteousness. Hebrews 13:8 declares Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. The only thing about God that has changed in the Bible, is how He deals with our sin, our salvation, and our being reconciled back to Him through the new covenant vs. the old covenant. God does not hate sin any less in the new covenant, than He did in the old covenant, but now He deals with it differently.

One example of this would be that in the old covenant many people died physically upon violating the law in some significant way, like sexual immorality, or disobeying their parents, etc. Today, rather than immediately punishing all sins by physical death, God often allows men to appear to be temporarily getting away with it, but, they are storing up His wrath against themselves until the day of judgment (See Romans 2:5). The point I wish to make is that when we look at the following passages that show marriages which



God hates more than divorce, we cannot then say, “*Well, that was the old covenant and God has changed and He no longer hates those kinds of marriages.*” In my opinion, to preach that God only hates divorce, without preaching that He also hates many marriages, is to preach a heresy about God. It’s a half-truth, a bird with only one wing, a teaching that can only fly in circles, going nowhere fast.

To show you how out of balance and corrupt the “*God hates divorce*” message is, try to read the following *also writtens* and then say, “*Yes, but God hates divorce*” after each one, and allow yourself to feel the contradiction of what you just said, compared to what you just read about the heart of God.

*Exodus 34:16 – And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.*

I have received many, many emails where a spouse has prostituted themselves to the ways and pleasures of the world and just as God warned in the above verse, they led the other spouse to do the same. This is a reason why Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 15:33 that *bad company corrupts good character.*

“*...Yes, Michael, but remember God really hates divorce.*”

*Deuteronomy 7:3-6 “Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.”*

In this passage God is saying that there are marriage unions which he hates so much that if they occur, He will destroy those who did it. Have you ever heard of God destroying someone for divorcing, even for the most foolish of reasons?

When I began turning from the pursuits of the world and the love of money, my ex-wife tried to turn me back to serving mammon and maintaining the worldly lifestyle we both loved at one time. The Bible says those who love the world and the things in the world are *adulterers*, and my ex-wife was trying to drag me back into that life. Externally, she appeared to be a Christian, always going to church and keeping her outer life clean and neat in appearance, but behind closed doors and in her heart, she was exceedingly wicked in God’s eyes. God calls this hypocrisy, and when we read the strongest words of Jesus’ in Matthew 23, we can see that He hates hypocrisy worse than almost any other sin.

“*...Yes, Michael, but remember God really, really, hates divorce.*”

*Deuteronomy 13:6 “If your very own brother, son or daughter, or the wife you love secretly entices you, saying, “Let us go and worship other gods” (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, gods of the peoples around you...do not yield to him or listen to them. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death...stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the Lord your God.”*

*Ezra 9:14 “Shall we again break your commands and intermarry with the peoples who commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us, leaving us no remnant or survivor?”*

The writer here states that marrying someone who commits detestable practices could anger God so much that He would completely wipe out the people, leaving no survivors. Have you seen anywhere in the Bible where God got that angry over a divorce?

*Ezra 10:2-3 “We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women...Now let us make a covenant before our God to **send away** (divorce) all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my Lord and of those who fear the commandments of our God...take courage and do it.”*

*Ezra 10:11 – Now make confession to the Lord, the God of your fathers, and do his will. **Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives.**”*

*“...Yes, Ezra, but you are forgetting that God really, really, really hates divorce...there is NO WAY it could be God’s will for them to have divorced their wives Ezra.*

Also, did God then demand that the people in Ezra chapter 10 never remarry after they repented of their sinful marriages and divorced their foreign wives? No, He did not. Are we to believe God would have punished them afterwards by not allowing them to ever marry again, even though they acknowledged, confessed, and repented of their sinful marriages? Does that fit with the character and mercy of God as seen elsewhere in Scripture, the God whose mercies are new every day (Lamentations 3:23) and who does not give us what our sins deserve (Psalm 103:10)?

*Nehemiah 13:26-27 – Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him...but even he was led into sin by foreign women. Must we now here that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?”*

God’s problem with foreign spouses was not because they were from another country. I even married a foreigner by God’s will, just as Persis did by marrying me. God’s problem was that these foreign spouses were leading His children to worship other gods besides him, and into many other detestable practices.

Today, your spouse may not try to lead you to worship an actual false god like Shiva in India, but what about if they lead you to love money, materialism, ungodly pleasures, sports and entertainment? What if they lead you to anger, jealousy, envy, sexual immorality, unforgiveness, coldness of heart, lukewarmness towards God, drugs or alcohol (all things that will lead you to spiritual death and eternal condemnation)? What if they lead you to believe in a false gospel, a false Jesus, a false spirit, or even into hypocrisy?

Shall we try to imagine that God is ok with these things if you just *stay married* to that person? Does God really care more about a temporary institution, that may last 60 years at its longest, more than He does your soul which is eternal? Is 60 years of staying married here on earth more important to God than a soul spending all eternity in hell? That is exactly what the legalists seem to believe and teach with their “*God hates divorce*” message, which as we can now see clearly from God’s words, is severely out of balance from the whole counsel of God. If you believe God is still the same, yesterday, today and forever than you must believe that God *still* very much hates any marriage (including yours) that could lead one of His children away from faithfulness to Him.

## **Do We Really Know Enough to Judge Every Divorcee?**

Are all divorces equal in God’s eyes? I have been through one of those things God hates called “divorce”. However, was I the one who broke faith with my first wife through adultery, and then again through divorce? Did I divorce her for some foolish reason because she was no longer pleasing to me? Did I do violence to her by putting her out of my house, leaving her to take care of her own welfare? No, I did not; I did not divorce her at all. She divorced me, doing violence to me and our children by alienating them from me, taking all our money and most of our possessions, etc. I have five children that I have not even seen in over five years because of parental alienation. How do you think God feels about that kind of a

divorce? Does He feel any differently about my responsibility in this divorce, than He does about the man or woman who does all those things to their spouse and then divorces them?

Not only have I been through a Christian divorce and remarriage myself, but because of the public nature of my story and ministry, I have heard from and personally replied to thousands of people from around the world, many of whom have also gone through it. Nevertheless, the most important point I wish to make here, is that regardless of what Scriptures I or anyone else can throw at you, you must seek God's personal guidance and will in these matters.

Many of God's truths are to be read and applied as black or white truths, having no gray areas. An example is that there is never a good time to withhold forgiveness from someone who has sinned against you and then repented. However, there are many other subjects like divorce and remarriage, which cannot be viewed in this black or white way. No pastor, no Christian author, no friend, no family member, and no YouTube minister knows the hidden issues, motives, spirits or eventual outcomes for each person in a marriage, but God does. Let me share a story that wonderfully proves this point.

One of my dear brothers in Christ, who now walks as closely with God as any I've ever seen, grew up in a Christian family. He was homeschooled and taught about the Bible from an early age and his family was in church every time the doors were open. As he grew up he saw things in his family that caused him to rebel from his Christian upbringing. He went prodigal for a while and during that season he ended up having pre-marital sex with his girlfriend, which went against everything he had been taught since he was a child. Afterwards, his conscience felt so guilty that he felt the only right thing to do was to marry her.

Six years later, his marriage was like a living hell that had dragged him further and further away from the light of Christ which he had known since he was a child. His wife liked to party and was drawn to the darkness. His life too became filled with drinking, partying, obsessing about fitness, steroids, and pursuits of all kinds of worldly pleasures. Soon, he began to realize that spiritually he was eating pig's food, and that he had lost his way in the Lord. He started to turn his life around through repentance and he pleaded with his wife to go to church with him and to follow him into the light, but she dug her heels in and refused. The tensions between them intensified and he started pleading with God for help and even contemplating divorce which went against everything he had been taught. He went to his church leaders and told them what was going on and they insisted that he could not divorce her, and that the only way for him to not sin was to stay married to her no matter what.

Soon, my brother started having these very vivid spiritual dreams, three of them, that he could never forget. In each of the dreams, his wife was trapped in a very dark place and there was a fixed chasm or object between them which he could not cross. He desperately tried to convince her to come out, but she refused. In a few instances, he realized that if he tried to go where she was to rescue her, he too would get trapped and die. His only option was to stay put and wait for her to come back out of the darkness by personal choice, with God's help, if she desired it.

Soon, God opened his spiritual eyes and showed him that in real life she was in bondage to the darkness because she loved it, and she hated the light and the truth of Christ. Although it was terribly sad news, He trusted God's insight to him, knowing that God was telling him that she was never coming out of the darkness, and that if he stayed he too would die.

This created an intense spiritual battle and internal struggle in his heart and mind. The church leaders put great pressure on him by telling him that his only option was to stay married to her no matter what, and yet at the same time He knew God was telling him that if he stayed with her, he too would die. Who was right? We can know a tree by its fruit, and wisdom is proved right by her actions, so what happened in this story? Were his legalistic church leaders right about God hating the idea of his divorce no matter what?

My friend decided to trust God completely by turning from the dark lifestyle he was living with his wife. They both agreed to the divorce and went through the process. The day after their divorce was finalized, my friend read of his ex-wife's announcement on Facebook, which showed a picture of her new engagement ring. She was gushing about her love of her new spouse to be, which was a woman. The darkness in this woman was so great that God had even turned her over to lesbianism, just as Paul described in Romans.

*Romans 1:25-26 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie...Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.*

Even with such a clear example of why God allows many marriages to fail, the spiritually blind legalist, who is a child of the devil, still comes along and cries out, *"if your friend really trusted God he would have stayed married to her and led her to Christ by his example...What God has joined together, let no man separate...?"*

God did not put my friend's marriage together any more than he put together the unions of Abraham and Hagar, David and Bathsheba, Samson and Delilah, my first marriage, or all the marriages which he hated in Ezra Ch. 10. Just like those unions, God permitted my friend's first marriage union and used it for his good purposes of afflicting my friend's heart and humbling Him, but let no one foolishly say God joined them together or that He should have stayed married to her. My friend was the one who put this marriage together in a moment where he walked according to his own understanding, rather than seeking God's will. God was gracious to him later, when he repented and humbled himself, but let the lesson be clear. God indeed hates many marriages like that one, far more than he does a divorce which will rectify it.

What an absolute shameful, despicable, unholy, unrighteous, and deceptively foolish thing it was for the so called "Christian" leaders of my friend's church to tell him that the only choice he had was to stay married to a child of the devil, a person who clearly loved and chose the darkness over the light. Had he stayed, perhaps the Lord would hold them accountable for his blood and eventual spiritual death.

Today, this brother and his new God given wife are living with Persis and I, until we both finish our tiny houses and set out to where God has us go. I see his life every single day and I know that he has the abundant life in Christ. God speaks to him and guides him just as much as He does me. God is richly blessing his life and heart and I'm seeing it up close and personal. The blind legalists cannot imagine such a thing, so be sure to do as Jesus taught and "leave them" (Matthew 15:14).

If my friend would have taken the ignorant and damning advice of his blind church leaders, he would be a spiritual corpse today and there would be no life in him whatsoever. How do I know this? Because I have received countless emails from around the world from people who lost their light and salvation in Christ because they were pressured by their ignorant church leaders to stay yoked to a child of the devil, who was dragging them into hell a little further each day. Many people have written to me exclaiming, *"I stayed too long...I am a shell of what I once was...the church tried to convince me that my spouse would come to Christ if I just stayed...I waited all those years while they lived in darkness and now I too am living in darkness...I have lost the presence of God...it's too late for me...please warn others."*

There is a time to stay, and there is a time to *leave*. The legalist mindset has no place for truth like this, but God's word, as we have already seen in the *also writtens* says this is exactly what will happen. You cannot yoke yourself to the darkness in your spouse and expect your light to overcome their darkness. God said, separate from the darkness, not to yoke yourself to it permanently and then just have faith that it will all work out! The decision to stay married to an unbelieving spouse, as we have already seen, is to be determined by that spouse's *willingness* to live with you in peace. Darkness knows no peace and darkness

is not neutral or static. Darkness is an active spirit which intends to put out your light and bad company intends to corrupt your good character.

Staying yoked with a spouse who loves the darkness and who is not willing to live with your faith, in peace, could very well be you putting God to the test. Just look at the facts of this world right now. Is the light overcoming the darkness, or is the darkness overcoming the light? The darkness is overcoming the light in the world AND in unequally yoked marriages. God said it would be this way; Jesus said darkness is coming and a time when no one can work, and then He even asked in Luke 18:8 if there would be anyone left on earth with faith in Him by the time He came back. Also, think of this sobering warning of Christ and how it applies to the very subject we are talking about.

*Revelation 3:11 – I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*

Shall we try to say that this warning does not apply if you are married to the person who is trying to drag you into the darkness and take your crown?

The *also writtens* show us the other half of God's heart on divorce and remarriage issues, and they are not dismissed or made void by Jesus' teachings in the sermon on the mount, but rather are complemented by them. Again, Jesus' message on divorce was a specific truth spoken to a specific group of people, who were having a specific imbalance in that area, just as was the case with Paul's teaching to the Corinthians on marriage and divorce. The Jews Jesus was addressing were divorcing for very foolish reasons and thinking they were still ok with God.

AGAIN, PLEASE UNDERSTAND THIS MOST IMPORTANT POINT: The people Jesus was speaking too were unspiritual Jews who had been divorcing for any and every *external* reason, ie, burnt toast, not making enough tasty food, not keeping the house properly cleaned, etc. In response to their divorcing for any and every external reason, Jesus finally told them that the only external reason they could divorce their spouse for was for reasons of "pornia", which is defined to mean both sexual immorality and idolatry.

These Jews were not in unequally yoked marriages, where one was serving God and the other was serving demons. Jesus was talking about marriages with both believers, and saying, don't divorce your spouse for "burning the toast", but if they have sex with someone else, (unfaithful) you may divorce them?"

Why in the world do Christians today still think that physically having sex with another person is the only way God thinks you could be unfaithful to your spouse? This is where I need to repeat the words of Christ—"stop judging by mere appearances (external things), and make a right judgment." Your spouse beating you is not unfaithful? Lying and using family money for porn or drugs and alcohol is not unfaithful? Preventing you from spending time with God or other Christians—beating you down with verbal abuse...none of these are unfaithfulness in God's eyes...He doesn't see any of these as "*doing harm or dealing treacherously with your spouse, as it says in Malachi?*"

Does it make any biblical sense at all that a spouse can have a medium over and call up the dead, or invite a tarot card reader into your home, or start attending the local church of Satan, but as long as they don't get naked and physically have sex with another human being, God says they are faithful and you may never divorce them? A good question to ask is, "*Does God even consider it a marriage, where these kinds of things are going on?*" A better question to ask is, "*Does God even consider a person who does these types of things to be alive?*"

Jesus' teachings on divorce were not being directed to people who were divorcing because their spouses were leading their hearts astray from their pure and sincere devotion to God. This is however, a major problem *today* in many Christian marriages, but this is not what Christ was addressing to *those* Jews. Those

Jews already knew God's heart and commands on dealing with spouses and marriages that tried to lead his children astray, as described in the verses we just read. Jesus was speaking to people who were leaving their wives over something as foolish as a burnt meal or because they simply wanted a new spouse. Do you see what a drastically different motive and issue these two are, and why Jesus emphasized what He did to those Jews? Do you also understand that Jesus addressing those Jews does not nullify, in anyway, God's heart on unequally yoked marriages which cut off the light and life of one of the spouses?

What if *we* asked Jesus a different question on divorce than those Jews who were still under the old covenant, and without the Spirit of Christ? Instead of asking if it's lawful to divorce our spouse for *any* and *every* external reason, what if we asked Jesus something like this. *"Lord, is it lawful to divorce your spouse when it becomes clear that even though they claim to be a Christian, they are actually a hypocritical child of the devil, who is preventing me from doing your will in my life?"*

After reading the earlier verses showing the marriages God hates, and why He hates them so much, would we still expect Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever to say, *"Unless your spouse has physically died or has physically had sex with another person, you must stay with them no matter how much they get in your way of following me, even if they intentionally try to turn you away from me."*

Where can you find in Scripture, God's heart to say something like that? Shall we read the passages again where it shows the marriages God hates and then say, *"But Lord, Paul wrote that love is patient...it never gives up...but Lord, I'm praying and I'll just trust you to turn them to Christ because you said through Paul that I should stay married to my unbelieving spouse no matter how much darkness they live in and no what they try to do to me because you said how do I know if I will save them by my example in 1 Corinthians 7."*

And the Lord would reply, *"No, I said if your unbelieving spouse is "willing" to live with you do not divorce, and I also said that I came to bring a sword...the sword divides the light from the dark."*

## **Another Reason God said He Hated Divorce.**

To be thorough, let's look back at another motive for God hating divorce and do some very basic Biblical reasoning here as well. God said He desires godly offspring through the marriage (Malachi 2:15). So, do all Christian marriages produce godly offspring under the new covenant? No. In the old covenant, an entire family could be godly simply by following the external rules in the Law of Moses. In the new covenant people are born spiritually into the family of God and made righteous by the Spirit, which according to Jesus, blows wherever He pleases, and according to Paul is not dependent on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. (See John 3:8 and Romans 9:16).

Just because I am a spiritual man walking with God, that does not mean that my children will come to know the Lord, even if I was still married to their mother. I myself, come from divorced parents, neither of whom taught me about the Bible or God. How did God receive me as a godly offspring? Because I was born in the new covenant and I was born of the Spirit of God, which blew into my life just as He pleased, despite the marital status and unbelief of my parents. I am not going to the extreme here of saying that staying married is not a good thing, or that all divorce is good and spiritual, but I am making the point that marriage is not the savior and is no longer the only way to produce godly offspring for God—the Spirit of the Living Christ blows wherever He pleases.

God is looking for spiritual children in the new covenant, and just because you are a spiritual Christian that does not at all guarantee that your children will be, even if you remain married and never get a divorce. On the contrary, Jesus said, that under the new covenant, following Him and being born again would create division in blood families, even turning children and parents against one another. Look how much things

have changed from the old covenant to the new. In the old covenant, keeping the family together was expected to result in godly offspring, whereas in the new covenant, godly offspring not only happen despite families not staying together, but many times become the very reason for tearing it apart.

*Matthew 10:34-38 “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn “a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*

In the new covenant, God is building a spiritual family, which leaves flesh and blood family counting for nothing in the end, if there is no Spirit born life. Becoming a spiritual man or woman of God, by being born of the Spirit of God and by following Jesus creates division in the new covenant between the carnal and the spiritual. No such a division was possible in the old covenant, as there were only a few truly spiritual believers in the old covenant because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given in mass to live inside anyone. (See John 7:39). Being born again is a new covenant principle only.

To press my point further, let us face the fact that many Christian marriages produce ungodly offspring, or even atheists, as a direct result of a toxic relationship, religious hypocrisy, or simply in accordance with God’s will and another person’s choice. Since God desires spiritual children for himself, and since He loves people more than He does the Law, how might God respond to these marriage truths? Does He continue to shout, *“I hate every divorce no matter what the circumstances are!”*?

## **The Idols of Marriage and Blood Family**

Another point for us to recognize is that even something very good, when it goes to an extreme, or gets out of balance, can become something very bad. Water is not only good, but absolutely necessary for life, and yet if you drink too much in one sitting, you can die from a condition called hyponatremia, which occurs when your blood loses too much salt.

I believe marriage, a good thing, has gotten completely out of balance in the hearts and minds of many Christians, to the point of becoming an idol. Someone once said that an idol is anything you run to before running to God. Over the last few years, I have received many emails from people who were desperately longing for God to give them a godly spouse and marriage. Many Christians, because they do not yet have fullness in Christ, desire marriage more than closeness with God. They are not content in God alone because they do not yet truly have Him. Instead, they believe they must be married to be happy. For them, marriage is indeed an idol. They say, *“God, let me just get married and then I’ll come to you”*, but God knows better. Jesus said marriage would be one of the earthly things that some people would love so much, and be so distracted by, that it would keep them from coming to Him.

*Luke 14:20 – “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’*

In that one verse, we can see that the institution which God has made (marriage), a good thing, has now become a very bad thing which prevents that person from coming to Him as Lord of their life. In these conditions, a good thing has now become bad in God’s eyes, and anything out of balance needs to be brought back into balance. When I was out of balance with money and it had become an idol in which I trusted, how did God respond but to strip me of my idol? How then shall we expect God to respond when marriage has become an idol among his people?

## Family is the not the Savior—Jesus Christ is

Many years ago, when I would hear the words, “Focus on the Family” (a radio ministry started by James Dobson) come on while I was listening to Christian radio, I had the discernment to say in my heart, “*No, that is not right...our blood family is not the savior that we have made it out to be. Family is the not the foundation of a nation that thrives, God is. Focus on God, not on the family. Marriage and family have become terribly acceptable idols.*” I have no doubt that there are many families that love each other and have stayed together through all, which will not be in the kingdom of heaven.

Most of us have been indirectly taught through “church” that if we can just keep our marriage and family together, all will be made well with our soul. And yet, just look at how very little the Bible speaks on these two subjects. There are only a few sentences in the entire new covenant, and yet thousands and thousands of books have been written on them, as if they are the pinnacle of societies salvation.

People write books, using examples like Rome, suggesting that when the disintegration of the family unit happened, so did the disintegration of the society. Biblically, this is not true. Roman society fell because it was ruled entirely by the pride of men and because they worshipped pagan god’s, which God warned in Psalm 16:4 that the sorrows of those will increase, who run after other gods.

You cannot read the Bible with open eyes and then say that keeping the blood family, or even marriages, together is God’s answer for the salvation and well-being of man. You also cannot read it without seeing that God Himself either directly causes or allows the greatest numbers of blood family separations in the Bible. Here is another vivid example of how much higher God’s ways are, over ours. Our instinct would be to keep families together all the time, no matter what. Is that God’s thinking?

*Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*

Who asked Abraham to leave His father’s household? Who asked Abraham to send off his son Ishmael and his wife Hagar? Who separated him from his nephew Lot? Who then separated Lot from his wife? Who separated Joseph from his parents and his brothers? Who separated Naomi and Ruth from their families? Who separated Esther? Who separated Samson from his wife in Judges 14 & 15? Who separated Samuel from his parents and brothers? Who separated Abigail from her husband Nabal, and then who gave her to David as his wife? Who separated David from his parents who forsook him (Psalm 27:10), and who separated him from some of his sons including a small innocent baby? Who separated John the Baptist from his family, or the disciples from their families? Who separated Paul? Who separated Ananias from his wife Saphira, before she too lied to the Holy Spirit? Who separated John on the Island of Patmos?

Finally, who said to the man who wanted to go home and bury his father, “*Let the dead bury their own dead?*” Who was the one who said, “*If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes even his own life—he cannot be my disciple?*”

The following example from the autobiography of Madame Guyon serves as an illustration of this truth.

*I was obliged to go to Paris about some business. Having entered into a church, that was very dark, I went up to the first confessor I found, whom I did not know, nor have ever seen since. I made a simple and short confession; but to the confessor himself I said not a word. He surprised me saying, "I know not who you are whether maid, wife or widow; but I feel a strong inward motion to exhort you to do what the Lord has made known to you, that he requires of you. I have nothing else to say." I answered him, "Father, I am a widow who has little children. What else could God require of me, but to take due care of them in their*



*education?" He replied, "I know nothing about this. You know if God manifests to you that He requires something of you; there is nothing in the world which ought to hinder you from doing His will. One may have to leave one's children to do that."*

A few pages later, she writes about her spiritual marriage to God and having to leave behind her children and blood family in order to do His will...

*The ties, with which the Lord held me closely united to Himself, were infinitely stronger than those of flesh and blood. The laws of my sacred marriage obliged me to give up all, to follow my spouse whithersoever it was His pleasure to call me after Him. Though I often hesitated, and doubted much before I went, I never doubted after my going of its being His will; and though men, who judge of things only according to the success they seem to have, have taken occasion from my disgraces and sufferings, to judge of my calling, and to run it down as error, illusion and imagination; it is that very persecution, and a multitude of strange crosses it has drawn upon me, (of which this imprisonment I now suffer is one,) which have confirmed me in the certainty of its truth and validity. I am more than ever convinced that the resignation which I have made of everything is in pure obedience to the divine will. The gospel effectually in this point shows itself to be true, which has promised to those that shall leave all for the love of the Lord, "an hundred fold in this life, and persecutions also."*

In our human understanding, and from our short view point, we fail to see the bigger picture and purposes of God in so many things. God gives so little importance to the flesh and blood of human relationships, but rather He makes great importance of the spiritual. When Jesus was told by the crowd to "focus on his family" in Matthew 12:47, what did He say? He said, "*Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?*" Then, pointing *not* to his blood relatives, but rather to his disciples, he says, "*Here are my mother and brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.*" He gave absolutely no preference or respect to his blood family, whatsoever. If the Spirit of Christ is in you, who then are your *real* mothers and brothers and sisters, if you believe what Jesus believed?

Now, if you don't realize how differently God thinks than us, just try to say that about your own family and see how wrong it feels to your nature. Shall we then think we are better than, or more Holy than Jesus by saying, "*I'm not ever feeling that way about my blood family.*" If we think that way, we can know that family is an idol to us. God is fully Spirit, and therefore He places importance on the invisible which is eternal. Men are carnal, and therefore place emphasis and importance on what is seen which is temporary (2 Corinthians 4:18)

To further show you how out of balance and idolatrous marriage has become to many, just think of how inappropriate Paul's words below would be if preached to a congregation today.

*1 Corinthians 7:29 – What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none.*

Please, just read those words again, written by God Himself through the Holy Spirit's influence on Paul, and then try to reconcile them with all the marriage messages, workshops, books, and sermons which are preached by men today on this subject. Who is out of balance with the true Spirit of Christ, Paul, or us?

A carnal Christian, like I was for so many years, cannot accept this hard teaching and truth. However, as we become true spiritual children of God, by the grace and Spirit of Christ, we transition continually away from the fleshly and temporal thinking and priorities to the spiritual and eternal. We no longer place such importance on blood relations, or marriage, and we begin to realize like Jesus that flesh and blood count for absolutely nothing, apart from the spiritual. I personally do not keep in touch, or pursue relationships,

with any of my natural family members who have rejected Christ in their life. I have chosen to follow Christ and to *“let the dead bury their own dead.”*

*1 Corinthians 15:50 – I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

## **Are All Divorcees the Same?**

In January of 2016, I reached out to brother Zac Poonen of CFC church in Bangalore, India, an anointed teacher of God’s word. I have never met Zac, but I love him as a brother, and respect Him as a true man of God very much. I wanted to see if he would do Persis and I the great honor of marrying us in India. I received a reply from the church saying that even though Zac doesn’t conduct marriages anymore, he would never have conducted mine because I am a divorcee. That email stung, especially in the face of waiting patiently for five and a half years for the fulfillment of God’s promise that I would be married again. Nevertheless, I accepted the shame and humiliation of being rejected as a divorcee, by a man of God, and as always, I simply trusted our Sovereign Father for whatever His plans were for our marriage.

As you will perhaps read in my autobiography, I wouldn’t have wanted a marriage, in any different way or place, than the one we had. Just as there was no room for our Lord to be born in a nice comfortable inn, but instead He was likely born in the lowliest of places, so there was no room for our marriage in the “church” and instead it was born in the humblest of places and circumstances. I see now what a glorious thing Father was doing. His ways truly are not our ways.

I respect brother Zac a great deal, and despite his rejection of me as a divorcee who serves the Lord, I have recommended his teachings in many of my own videos. While I do not agree with his view on all divorce and remarriage situations, that brother is nonetheless wonderfully anointed by the Lord. It is helpful to me that I have lived in India, and thus I understand why he believes so legalistically about divorce the way he does. The entire Indian culture is extremely legalistic, and it especially looks down on all divorcees. Zac’s issue is not a personal issue with *my* divorce, but rather with all divorces in general, as he understands it in the Bible. I have prayed that the Father would give Zac more insight on this subject, just as He has for me, because I too looked down on divorce Christians, until I became one. Again, it takes two people to make a marriage, but only one to file for divorce.

I am happy that Zac, and other godly men like him, have never had the experience of an unfaithful wife, or of a wife who stood against them and then left them when they started trying to obey God’s will for their life. However, I *have* had that experience, and I do not believe it makes me a second-class Christian, or unworthy to serve Christ publicly, in any way. On the contrary, I have testified repeatedly that God was heavily involved in both my divorce and my remarriage stories, to the point that there is no denying that He orchestrated them both. Additionally, those two events alone have shaped my character and my walk with Christ far more than any other. What a blessing it would be for men like John Piper, David Pawson, and Zac Poonen, to sit down and humbly read this in consideration of the flock they minister too, many of whom have been through a divorce they did not want to experience. Perhaps they too might discover that there are many marriages today which God hates worse than divorce! Perhaps they would be reminded that God is still in the business of separating the light from the dark, even when it means crushing the institution which He created. Hallelujah!

Not all Christians believe this however. I once heard brother Zac warning his congregation about listening to these popular television or internet preachers from the West, as he rightfully should. However, at one point, he said, *“You don’t even know that man...he could even be divorced.”* When Zac makes a statement

like that, he is disqualifying *me* as a minister, and suggesting that God could not possibly be doing through *me*, a divorced and remarried servant of His, that which in fact He is doing through my little ministry.

This assertion proves to be incorrect, when compared against the fruit in my life. God has blessed me with fullness in Christ, answered hundreds of my prayers, did many miracles of His provision in both my divorce and remarriage stories, and has since blessed me with an abundantly fruitful ministry. If we believe Jesus when He says a tree is recognized by its fruit, then I can say confidently, “*God is with me, the divorcee.*”

The legalist mindset, if it has any humility at all, should ask, “*does God bless adulterers the way He has blessed me?*” What adulterer can testify to not worrying about anything in his life because His God faithfully provides for him over and over? (Mat 6:31-34) What adulterer has rest for their weary soul in Christ? (Mat 11:28-30) What adulterer has no thirst for anything, or anyone in this world because he has a living water inside of him which quenches all his carnal thirsts? (John 4:13-14) What adulterer lives without any anxiety in his life and has the peace of Christ, regardless of the circumstances he faces? (John 14:27) What adulterer has an abundance of documented answered prayers? (John 15:5-8) and what adulterer has been made fruitful, both in his heart, and in his ministry with the authentic fruit of Christ, not the kind money loving television evangelists produce?

*John 9:31 - “We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.”*

The question begs to be answered by many teachers on this topic—was my kind of divorce the same as all others? Does God hate every single divorce, regardless of the circumstances, and does He truly consider every re-marriage, apart from the physical death of a spouse, to be the sin of adultery? Is there never an acceptable time to divorce your spouse, and remarry outside of sexual unfaithfulness?

The Biblical answer is yes, there are acceptable times to divorce your spouse and acceptable times to remarry, regardless of what legalism teaches, and this is not just my opinion. Even in the Scriptures, we can see that God is not a legalist.

## **God is NOT a legalist!**

Unlike the Pharisees and the legalists, God loves and places more priority on *people* than He does the law or the rules. The law and rules were made for man, not man for the law and rules, just as Jesus taught about the Sabbath law. As an example, God gave a law in Leviticus 19:11, “*Do not lie and do not deceive one another.*” And yet, we can see in Scripture, three times, that God not only allowed lying, but then rewarded several people for doing it.

The Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, lied to the Pharaoh in Exodus 1:15-17 to save the Jewish babies from being murdered. Rahab the prostitute lied in Joshua 2:4 to spare the life of the Jewish spies, and King David lied to Achish king of Gath, by pretending to be insane, to spare his own life. A legalist would have stood in those scenes, with stones in hand, to condemn all three as lying deceiving sinners, and yet, God not only allowed it, but He abundantly rewarded all three for their lies.

From these examples, we know we cannot legalistically say that there is *never* an appropriate time, or righteous motive to lie. There are clearly times when violating the rule “not to lie” was motivated by a good reason, *and* which led to life.

Proverbs 6:17 says God hates a lying tongue, but what would He have hated more, a lying tongue or the killing of those babies by Pharaoh? What would He have hated more, Rahab lying, or the Israelite spies being caught and tortured?

Malachi 2:16 says God hates divorce, but what does God hate more, divorce or an unequally yoked *marriage of death* which leads to the spiritual asphyxiation of one of his children? What if someone's motive to divorce is good, and not evil—does God hate and condemn that divorce?

God is clearly not a legalist, and He cares more about a person's life and spiritual condition than He does the rule. God, my heavenly Father, cared more about my soul than He did the temporary institution of marriage. God is motivated by life, not by rules and commands. The rules and commands have always been meant to be the means to a greater end, but in the mouths of legalists, they often get in the way of that end. The legalist mindset cannot comprehend or understand these kinds of things about God. It cannot understand why Jesus broke the Sabbath so many times, to heal a person, which is why the Pharisees were constantly condemning Him for doing so. To the legalist, the rules are more important than the person.

Perhaps to the shock of many legalists, the Bible even tells us that God himself is a divorcee who has remarried, having divorced Israel and then married the Gentiles through Christ. The God who hates divorce clearly hated His marriage to Israel more than He hated a divorce to end it.

*Isaiah 50:1 This is what the Lord says: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away?"*

*Jeremiah 3:8 "I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries."*

God divorced Israel because of her unfaithfulness. Was it because Israel literally slept with another god, or because she was not faithful to Him in her heart? Also, let's take note of the fact that God is not a widower; Israel is still very much physically alive. Shall we then look down on God, for His divorce and subsequent remarriage to the Gentiles, while the Israelites are still physically alive? Shall we say God can no longer preach the Word, or serve as a deacon in the "church", because He has had more than one wife?

Shall we try to be more Holy than God? God doesn't need a pastor to marry Him, but if we apply the same legalistic standards being preached to the body of Christ, to God Himself, He would never have been able to find a preacher to marry Him to the Gentiles, because he was a divorcee whose wife (Israel) was still physically alive. Should God be ostracized, or seen as a second-class God, because his first wife was terribly unfaithful to Him and then His marriage ended in divorce? What are we missing?

If you can see it, the heart of God in Scripture is for redeeming and saving sinners, even if means destroying the earthly institutions he established called marriage and blood family, or even one of his own commands and principles. Irrespective of what legalistic people wish to believe, God is perfectly willing to break his own laws, institutions, and commands, in order to save the sinners He loves. If God was willing to throw away the *entire* old covenant, abolishing the entire body of external laws and regulations, to save sinners by His grace through Christ, (See Eph 2:15, Gal 5:18, Heb 8:6-10), how much more willing is he to destroy a few blood family relationships, or temporary earthly institutions called marriages?

Do you believe God loves your eternal soul enough, to destroy your earthly marriage, or your blood family, if it means saving your soul from an eternity in hell, separated from Him? Or, do you believe, like many legalists, that God values the law more than He does people, that he puts the rules first, not the souls of men? Jesus made this answer clear in Mark 2:27, using the Sabbath law as an example. *He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."* A spiritual man can also say to the legalist, *"Marriage was made for man, not man for marriage."*

The question remains; What does God value more, the temporary earthly institution of marriage, or saving your eternal soul?

Let me go back to my illustration of being married to someone who became a Satan worshipper. Let's then assume that my first wife never repented, and that she remained a Satan worshiper many years after our divorce. Would the legalists still say that God can only be pleased when I divorce Persis and remarry the Satan worshipper because she is still physically alive? Yes, many of them would, and I am aghast at the spiritual insanity of this type of ignorant thinking. This is what can happen when you are blinded by legalism, rather than led by the Spirit which gives life. You end up straining out gnats to swallow camels!

The legalists say that God hates divorce more than he hates my being yoked with a child of the devil, which blocks my light and strangles my spiritual health in Christ? They believe God is willing to suffer more from my unfaithfulness, my lukewarmness, and even my spiritual death, than he would a divorce that might rectify that? You cannot possibly read Ezra Ch. 10 and continue to believe this falsehood about our loving Heavenly Father?

Someone may argue, but your ex-wife was not a Satan worshipper, or a child of the devil. However, a person doesn't have to openly worship Satan to be a child of his. There is not one mention of any openly professing, card carrying, Satan worshipper in the whole Bible, and yet, it is filled with stories of children that are very much his, and busy doing his will. Here is God's definition of a child of the devil.

*1 John 3:7-8, 10 "Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. Verse 10 says, this is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother."*

Remember, the Holy Spirit called Elymas *a child of the devil*, not because he was a porno addict, a drunkard, a murderer, a gambler, or a thief, but because he tried to prevent the proconsul from hearing the word of God. God's definition of a child of the devil is much different than ours.

If you have children, ask yourself this question. What would you hate more, your child divorcing what God has called a child of the devil, or their staying in a marriage which relentlessly yokes them to darkness and increasing spiritual death, because of the stubborn wickedness and unrepentance of their spouse? As you watch your child slowly drift further and further from the light of Christ and further into spiritual death, will you yell at them, *"stay the course son or daughter...don't separate from your spouse who is willing to live with you still...how do you know if you will save them or not, and remember God HATES divorce."* Does our loving heavenly Father yell, *"stay the course with that child of the devil...stay yoked to the darkness...let them lead you into the pit if you have to, because I hate divorce far more than I do your eternal spiritual death, or the glory that I could have had through your life!!"*

Here is an excerpt from a woman who stayed in her unequally yoked marriage too long.

*"Life has had no meaning for me for a long time. What a painful way to live. All I ever saw was violence to my heart & soul, my ex-husband wasn't God's choice and Satan used him to destroy my relationship with God. He never wanted Jesus because the world was more enticing for him and we were like night & day in Christ. I was the one, by His grace, pursuing God all these troubled married years and now I am no better than my ex who succeeded in turning me away from God, like him. I never wanted that but because of his betrayal to God I was grieved in my soul thinking he'll one day come to his senses and serve God, but not according to 1Cor 7:15-16. In the long run it has killed me & left me in despair."*

I'm not saying God is interested in breaking up all marriages, or that he loves divorce, but I am saying that it must be brought to the light that He also hates many marriages, like *that* one, *far more* than He hates divorce.

If I try to convince someone to stay in a marriage with a child of the devil, where it is clear from the fruit in their heart and life, that the darkness in their spouse is winning, shall I then insist that person must throw themselves down at the mercy of God and trust God to save them or their spouse? If God tells you clearly to do that (not your own fearful or corrupt imagination speaking on his behalf), then that is what you should do. However, what if God sees that in cases where He has not specifically asked someone to stay put, that it is the spiritual equivalent of putting Him to the test? Do you remember these words in the Bible? *“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here...God will save you.”* Who said those words? Couldn't someone have looked at that situation and said, *“Yeah Jesus, just trust God...he's got you in this...the devil can't harm you in anyway...just have faith Son of man!”* Think of how many people are sitting at a coffee shop right now, saying to someone who is married to what God calls a child of the devil, essentially telling that person, *“Just throw yourself down...trust God...have some faith...God will lift you up so that you do not strike your foot against a stone!”*

I have heard from far too many people like the woman above, who were convinced to stay yoked to the darkness in their spouse, by their church leadership and friends who told them that they had no other option but to stay, if they wanted to please God and inherit eternal life. THAT IS DEVIL TALK! Their emails to me were filled with the pain and regret of having lost years or decades of their life in a marriage of hell. Many even recognize that they are now spiritually dead and have lost their salvation. They did just as the devil challenged them to do...they threw themselves down in that marriage of darkness and they put God to the test. They stayed yoked to a child of the devil, and they took upon themselves all the darkness and spiritual diseases of that person. Their light had been put out...their flame extinguished...the heart trampled. They failed to see and obey the clearly written “also writtens”. How terribly sad and tragic, when God's heart on the matter was right there in the Bible, to be freely understood when simply accepted, rather than listening to the legalists.

At some point, we must read principles like the following, and tell that person who is giving perhaps well-meaning advice, “it is also written”. *“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”* – 2 Corinthians 6:17

I wonder how many millions of people across the world could testify that they know and feel that God has not yet received them because they are still yoked to the darkness? The legalists believe God is much more interested in protecting an "earthly" temporary institution called marriage, which doesn't even exist in heaven, than He is in bringing himself glory, by separating a true child of His from the darkness in a partner who refuses to come into the light. At its core, this belief suggests that God crushing Jesus Christ to save sinners, is not nearly as horrible of a crime as him crushing a marriage to save a sinner. **If God was willing to crush the eternal Son to save eternal lives, is He not willing to crush His temporary institution called marriage to save some?** Marriage is NOT the savior, Jesus Christ is!

## **Spiritual Death in the New Covenant:**

God's providential guidance throughout my divorce and subsequent remarriage to Persis, was astonishing! I was so caught up in the faith journey, walking as a child before my Father, that I never really felt the need to understand doctrinally all that God was doing or why. I have seen a pattern in my walk with God where I often experience something with Him first, and then sometime later He gives me understanding or teaches me the Biblical principles or reasons why He did that.

Shortly after making my remarriage to Persis known publicly, I began receiving lots of emails from other people who were confused about how God may view remarriage in their situation. That's when I began asking God to show me what principle of His it was, that allowed me to remarry without it being adultery

since my first wife was still physically alive. Again, I would like to make the point that my situation may not be your situation, and God's will for me may not be God's will for you. You must seek His personal guidance on all these matters. In this book, I am simply showing you God's whole counsel and heart on marriages like the one I was in.

Soon after my inquiry, God opened my eyes to the principle of spiritual death in the new covenant, which is far more important than the principle of physical death in the old covenant.

*John 7:37-39 – On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time **the Spirit had not been given**, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

In the old covenant, there was no real *spiritual* life, like there is now. The Spirit of God came in, or upon, only a select few people, and there was only one kind of life and death relevant to the people—physical. This is easily understood in verses like the following from David, where he sees physical death as the ultimate end of his usefulness to God.

*Psalms 30:9 – ‘What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?’*

In another example, compare how the prophet Isaiah viewed physical death, compared to the apostle Paul's view of death. Isaiah had an old covenant view, and Paul had a new covenant view.

*Isaiah 38:18 – For the grave cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praise; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today.*

Now, look at how Paul felt about his physical death. Philippians 1:21 – *For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: **I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far..***”

You will not find this attitude about death in the old covenant, where someone feels, “*dying is better by far than living*”, except in instances like where Job is feeling suicidal, even cursing the day he was born.

To make my point even clearer, just try to imagine Paul saying what Isaiah said above in chapter 38:18. You cannot imagine Paul saying something like that, because Paul is alive spiritually in the new covenant.

You may also notice that many times where death is mentioned in the old covenant, like in the two previous verses of David and Isaiah, it is often associated with going down to the dreaded *pit*. This word and concept do not exist in the new covenant, and the living referred to now are the *spiritually* living, whereas in the old covenant it was only those who were physically alive. The only mention of *pit* in the new covenant is regarding the bottomless pit in Revelation, where Satan is thrown for a thousand years. In the new covenant, God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, sees every single person as dead because a new spiritual life was required for our being reconciled back to Him.

*John 5:24 - I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; **he has crossed over from death to life.***

Jesus is not talking about people being resurrected or crossing over from physical death to physical life. He is speaking of spiritual death, the condition that every single person on earth is in, until they hear and believe the gospel of Christ. Jesus goes on in verse 25 to explain further that this new covenant time has now come.

*“I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.”*

The next time you go to work, or to the mall, or to some large group event, you will see a bunch of physically alive people walking around doing all kinds of work. That is not what God sees. God sees that most of them are the walking *dead*. Every person in the world fits into one of these two categories, either they are in Christ, and thus spiritually alive, or they are outside of Christ and are spiritually dead. Remember that man looks on the outside, but God looks on the heart (1 Sam 16:7).

What really matters the most from God’s perspective, people’s physical life or spiritual life? If Jesus said *the flesh counts for nothing* in John 6:63, and Paul said that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God in 1 Corinthians 15:50, then why do we insist that physical death is the only death that matters in a marriage covenant, when it is quite possible for your spouse to be spiritually dead?

Preachers only think of physical death breaking the marriage bond because of passages like Romans 7. In Romans 7:1, Paul says he is writing to men who know the law of Moses and he is about to explain how a Jew goes from being married to the Law, to being married to Christ. He explains that the law only has authority over a man *as long as he is alive*. In verse 2 he says, *“For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.*

This is the first Scripture that people use to tell me that I am an adulterer because my ex-wife is still physically alive. So, let’s pause here on Paul’s words and ask this question—have you ever in your life heard of a person *physically* dying to the law so that they can be spiritually married to Christ? No, you have not. Do you see the irony here? Because we are physically alive human beings with five senses and very little understanding of the spiritual, Paul, like Jesus who used many parables, is using a physical illustration to teach a deeper spiritual reality. What Paul is teaching about the physical death of a spouse is true, but it’s not the only truth here.

In verse 6, he says, *“By dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”* Did you physically die to what once bound you? No, you did not, or you would not be reading this right now. So, what kind of death is Paul speaking about? No one dies *physically* to the law to be released from their marriage to it. This is a spiritual principle, not a physical one. It helps to keep in mind that Romans 7 is all about the law and that word is used 21 times in just 25 verses. The word Spirit only appears one time in the entire chapter. In sharp contrast, Romans 8 is all about the Spirit and true life wherein the word “Spirit or spirit” appear 17 times in the first 17 verses. Paul is now teaching us about true spiritual life—the life of a Christian.

This law was first given to the Jews, a people of the old covenant who were not spiritual believers as we have already seen. The Spirit had not yet been given, so a physical reality was all that they really knew. Have you noticed that there are a lot of physical deaths resulting from sin in the old covenant, but not even a handful in the new covenant? Off the top of my head, I can only think of King Herod and Ananias and Sapphira, who were instantly dropped dead by God, as a direct result of sin. In the new covenant there is a far greater type of death, spiritual death, which we will see shortly.

Again, in 1 Corinthians 7:39, Paul uses a physical example to express a spiritual truth, saying, *“A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.”*



Romans 7:2 and this passage above are the two passages that the legalist mind uses to say, “*See, if your spouse is still physically alive, even if they had an affair on you, even if they abandoned the marriage, even if they are a child of the devil, you are still bound to them no matter what.*”

Can you see what a contradiction that type of thinking is when you simply read Paul’s command in 1 Corinthians 7:39 that if a widow remarries, he **MUST** belong to the Lord? Paul explains how important it is for a widow who marries again, to marry a *believer*. From this, we can also see that it is a pretty serious matter when a believer is married to an unbeliever.

Would God honestly demand that a person stay married to someone who becomes a Satanist? Would God say that a wife must remain bound to her Satanist husband because he is still *physically* alive? No, He would not, and we don’t have to just make something up about God’s mind on this; There are plenty of Scriptures that show us. In God’s eyes, children of the devil are *dead*. This is a principle all throughout the new covenant that many fail to see and distinguish from physical death.

Remember, what Paul is saying about a Christian woman being bound to her Christian husband as long as he is alive is true, but also remember that Paul is speaking primarily about a marriage where both people are believers and are in Christ. If a married man remains a follower of Christ, his believing wife is bound to him as long as he is physically alive. This is exactly what Paul is saying and it is true. He has already addressed the option of divorcing an unbelieving spouse who is not willing to live with the believer in peace, in 1 Cor 7:13-14, so now he is speaking about marriages between two believers.

In the new covenant we become the place of God’s dwelling, no longer a temple made by human hands (1 Corinthians 3:16). No longer can a person just follow God’s external rules and laws, or just be a good person externally, and still be found righteous before Him. Now, under this new covenant, a person must become spiritually alive as a worshiper of God through the process of being born again by the Spirit of God (See John 3:1-8, 4:23). In the new covenant, we become the temple of God, the place where He dwells among His people. When a person is spiritually alive, God is in His house, when a person is spiritually dead, God is not there.

I had been allowed to remarry because God sees the condition of my ex-wife as spiritually dead, no different than how He saw the Pharisees, white washed tombs full of dead men’s bones. Therefore in 1 Corinthians 7:15, Paul taught that the believing spouse is no longer *bound* in marriage, when the unbelieving spouse leaves. The reason is that when an unbelieving spouse leaves a Christian marriage, they are rejecting Christ, more than they are the marriage. A person who rejects Christ is *dead* in God’s eyes as you will see in the following Scriptures. There are more passages than the one’s I am listing. Please do your own research.

*John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; **he has crossed over from death to life.**”*

Jesus says that a person who hears and obeys his words has crossed over from death to life. He is speaking of spiritual death and spiritual life, not physical. That means that every person who does not believe in Christ, as evidenced by their obeying His words, is spiritually dead, regardless of how alive they look on the outside (See Revelation 3:1 below).

*Romans 6:13 – Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as **those who have been brought from death to life...**”*

*Romans 7:10-11 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life, actually brought **death**. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment **put me to death.***

Paul, who was still very much alive when he wrote this letter is clearly not saying he was put to death physically, but he is again speaking only about spiritual death.

*Romans 8:2 – Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

*Romans 8:6 – The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;*

Again, think of all the sinners in the world who are 100% physically alive in their sins, but Paul says here they are in death.

*James 5:20 – Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death..*

*James 2:26 – As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.*

What a clear passage James has given us here. Unless a person is born again, by the Spirit, just as Christ taught in John 3, they remain in spiritual death.

*1 John 3:14 – We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.*

Here, John explains that if I do not love my brothers, I may appear physically alive, but spiritually I remain in death. This is how God sees people like my ex-wife. After being given many chances to repent and come to the light, she dug her heels in and God turned her over to a depraved mind (See John 12:40 - Romans 1:28-32). To this day, all these years later, she remains in death. From Father's perspective I am a spiritual widower.

*Matthew 8:22 – But Jesus told him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”*

Jesus is not speaking about people who are physically dead. Dead people cannot bury other dead people. No, he is speaking of spiritual death, the only death that matters in the new covenant. When God saw that my ex-wife rejected the true path of Christ and she instead chose spiritual death, he called me to let her go and to follow Him.

*Matthew 23:27 – “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones...”*

The Pharisees are not the only people Jesus says are filled with “dead men's bones”. Jesus says this about all hypocrites. We can be certain that a practicing hypocrite is someone who is spiritually dead.

*Luke 15:32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.*

*John 12:40 – “He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts..”*

*Romans 8:10 – But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.*

If Christ is not in a person, their spirit is not alive, but remains in death. When a person rejects Christ, they remain dead.

*Romans 11:15 – For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*

*Ephesians 2:1 – As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

Before and until a person is in Christ, they are dead in their sins.

*Ephesians 2:5 – [He] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions...*

*Ephesians 5:14 – “Wake up, O Sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*

*Colossians 2:13 – When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ.*

*1 Timothy 5:6 – But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.*

How much clearer could God distinguish between spiritual and physical death than in the above passage? Here, He clearly says that even a widow who lives for this life is spiritually *dead*, even while her body physically lives. From this simple little passage, we can see that according to the Lord, if you are married to someone who lives for pleasure, you are married to a *dead* person. That is how God sees all that love the world and reject his truth and will, even though it is so hard for us to grasp. To Father, they are DEAD!

*Jude 1:12 – These men...they are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead.*

*Revelation 3:1 - ...you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.*

Here is Jesus Christ, himself, speaking to people who are still physically alive and saying according to me (The Creator and Sustainer of all creatures), you are dead!

In the new covenant when you are finally left by a spouse who rejected Christ, you are being left by someone who the Bible says is “dead”. Also, please remember that it is God alone who knows whether you or your spouse are spiritually alive or dead. God knows if a person will ever come alive in the Spirit, or if they have walked away and rejected Christ forever. Let God give you discernment and insight into this, if it applies to your spouse.

One time I was invited to a funeral, but I did not want to attend because I was busy with my work for God and I did not believe the person was in heaven as a true follower of Christ. Only God knew for sure the condition of that man, not me, so I prayed about going to the funeral and God led me to Matthew 8:22 where he said, “Come follow me and let the dead bury their own dead”. To a great number of people in their church, this person was a saint, loved by so many, but God was telling me this person was “dead”.

If God shows you that your spouse is dead, you can be sure they are dead. You can discern a tree by its fruit, but please ask the Lord to show you His wisdom and will in these types of matters.

## **Spiritual Death is Contagious**

*Revelation 18:4 – “Come out of her my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues..”*

If you put a dead body in your bed tonight and sleep with it, you will easily contract the diseases of that dead body. The same thing is true in the spiritual realm, where if you continue to yoke yourself with a person who is spiritually dead, you should expect that the darkness in them will eventually corrupt you. This is why God gave us so many warnings telling us to separate from the wicked and disobedient. While living with someone who was angry, I too started becoming angry. I was being corrupted by her disease.

*1 Corinthians 15:33 – “Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.”*

Who will be the one to say we must throw away all the following commands, that tell us to separate from the wicked and the disobedient, because they don't apply in marriage? I'll let you get out your own Bible and look them up, but just try reading through these verses in your Bible and then add the words, *“except if you are married”* to the end of each one and see if that feels like truth in your spirit. If it is not truth, what is it?

**Psalms** 1:1, 26:5, 101:4, 7-8, 119:113,115,118 - **Proverbs** 13:20, 19:19, 22:10, 22:24-25, 23:9 - **Matthew** 7:6, 10:34-38, 18:17 - **Mark** 3:25, 8:22, 10:14, 12:30 - **Romans** 1:32, 16:17 - **1 Corinthians** 5:11-12, 15:33 **2 Corinthians** 6:14-17 - **Ephesians** 5:3-7, 5:11-14, **2 Timothy** 3:1-5, Tit 3:10-11 - **Hebrews** 1:8-9 - **1 Timothy** 5:22 - **2 John** 1:11 - **Revelation** 18:4

## Should you Remarry?

I will tell you my opinion plainly, but it may seem quite ironic, or even hypocritical—I think most people will be far happier to stay single and to receive the grace of God to do so. These are absolutely terrible days spiritually, and there are far more tares (counterfeits) in the “church” than wheat. After reading thousands of emails, and hearing hordes of tragic divorce and remarriage stories where people were absolutely convinced, *“this was the one God chose for me”*, only to discover they had a counterfeit, I must stand by and repeat the advice of Paul.

*1 Corinthians 7:28 – “Those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.”*

*1 Corinthians 7:40 “In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is (single)—and I too think I have the Spirit of God.*

When considering remarriage, I know from all the correspondence I've had with people that most men primarily think, *“If I don't remarry, how will I ever live without sex?”* And I think most women primarily think, *“Where will my financial security come from?”* I found out, by experience, as a perfectly healthy male, that God's grace is more than enough in both of those areas, if you trust Him. I lived the better part of five years completely celibate, all on God's amazing grace, without being miserable. Sure, I had a few difficult moments, but God always delivered me. He can give you the power to put down the flesh and grant peace to your spirit and body. Also, I have now lived for over 7 years without what most people call a *job*, and without doing what most people call *work*, and God has provided all my needs as I obeyed Him, just as he has done for many others for thousands of years. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be given you. Matthew 6:33.

I did not ask God for another spouse when my first wife divorced me. I simply asked if it was His will for me to ever marry again. God is the one who told me I would have a wife again one day. After that, I became fixated upon the idea of being married again and it became too important to me. I had such a strong desire, and God made me wait, and wait, and wait. Then, by July of 2015, nearly five years after receiving the promise I would be married again, I found myself with such deep contentment and happiness in Christ,

that I told God I no longer wanted to be married. I just wanted to remain single and enjoy Him in all His goodness. I found that God alone was more than enough for me, despite the terribly strong desire to be married, which I had carried in my heart for years. I found a very deep contentment in Christ.

Nonetheless, it was not God's plan for me to remain single. Father had some very good and wise reasons for me to be married again. First, my being single was a distraction to myself and other single Christian sisters, in my ministry. More importantly, there were some deep areas of *self* and un-Christlikeness in my heart that could only be revealed to me in a marriage. God has used my marriage to Persis, and our extreme differences, to do deeper levels of heart surgery on me. God's purpose for my re-marriage to Persis had nothing to do with satisfying the needs of my flesh, or for making a great romance. It has been to conform me more into the image of Christ through suffering. It is astonishing to me to see how much God picked the perfect spouse for my spiritual needs, in Persis. God gave me a wife who exposed deep levels of weakness and pride in my heart which I didn't even know I had.

Persis and I went through quite a few painful and very scary episodes in our marriage in the first two years, but by His grace today we enjoy extraordinary peace in our marriage. Several times on my prayer walks, I have exploded in gratitude, mixed with laughter, regarding how absolutely perfect God's choice of a wife for me was. And I'm not saying that because she was some perfect helpmate who complemented all my needs, no, I'm saying that because she brought about the perfect suffering I needed to be touched in deep spiritual places and to shape my character. She was truly the perfect match for God's deep work in my life. We have both been amazed by this, and I am becoming more like Jesus, at very deep levels, because of my remarriage to Persis. If I would have remained single, perhaps I would have missed out on much of this growth which God had planned. Instead I chose to do God's will, which brings me to my final and most important part of this entire book.

## **Seeking God's Wisdom and Personal Will for Your Life**

Perhaps, by reading this book you've gained some additional awareness of God's heart and truth regarding divorce and remarriage situations. No doubt, there will be many who read this looking for the exact answer on what *they* should do in *their* unique situation, only to be disappointed that it was not addressed in this writing. Perhaps they might want to send me an email saying, "*But, Michael...what do I do in this situation.*" That is an email needs to be *sent to God*, not to me, or any other man.

*Isaiah 2:22 – Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?*

Just last week, I was told another story of a woman who had long been divorced from her first husband and was now living with another man, divided in heart and conscience about what to do. She was very anxious for a few years about whether to marry him or not. Finally, she went to her pastor and asked him if she could remarry. He said, "*of course you can remarry*", and so she put away all her doubts and checks in her spirit and married the man because the "man of God" told her she could. It was all downhill misery and curses from that point on.

*Isaiah 50:10-11 – Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God. But now, all you who provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. Here is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.*

That woman I just told you about who went to a man, (her pastor), to provide herself with some light and her own "flaming torch" is now spiritually lying down in torment, just as God warned in this passage. This is what happens when we take matters into our own hands and find the counsel from men that we want to

hear or try to work a *deliverance* for ourselves. If you have already done this, confess it to Father, turn from it and come before Him in great humility and helplessness.

*Psalm 25:9 – He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.*

*Psalm 25:12 – Who, then, is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him.*

This is why I say that even after all that I've shared with you, if you are struggling with questions like, "should I divorce, or should I remarry, or am I an adulterer because I have already remarried?", please do not allow *anyone* besides God Himself to throw Scriptures at you saying, "here's what you should do because here's what it says in the Bible".

Far too often, men deceive us or misapply the word of God, and rarely do we have enough information to make a righteous judgment. I had to apologize to a brother, recently because I made an incorrect judgment about his motives in a matter that I found to be very worldly. I made a judgment based on what looked like a clear set of circumstances to me, but I didn't have enough information and I ended up being wrong.

From my personal experience of hearing so many others' stories, I can tell you that many divorce and remarriages are like snowflakes, in that almost no two are alike. Rarely do the actual people involved have enough information to make a proper judgment, much less the man behind the pulpit, or the YouTube video.

You need counsel from the only One who truly knows your heart, and the heart of your spouse. He is the only One who knows all the facts, and He is the only One who knows His personal will for your life. Your family may tell you to leave, when God clearly wants you to endure. Your legalistic, or even well-meaning pastor may tell you must stay, when God clearly wants you to go. If I had listened to what others thought the Bible said about my own divorce and remarriage, I would have missed God's very best work and His very best blessings in my life. The greatest parts of who I am today, the parts of me that are most like Jesus Christ, are a direct result of my divorce, and then my remarriage to my wife Persis.

To show you why we must refrain from making quick external judgments about ourselves, or others who have gone through divorce and/or remarriage, consider this. Let's say you believe what I just said, and you find that yourself, or someone else, is guilty of an unlawful divorce or remarriage. How do you know if that person truly knew the difference between right and wrong in that situation when they went through it? Were they a mature Christian at the time in God's eyes? In other words, did they know Him? Had they been enlightened? Had they tasted the heavenly gift and shared in the Holy Spirit? Had they tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age? (Heb 6:4-5)

Clearly, the Father does not hold true believers accountable for the sins they committed before they became a believer in Christ, or before they received light on that situation. And when does God consider someone a believer who is to be held accountable to that truth? Is it the same time you do?

Look at the woman Jesus met at the well in John chapter 4. She was clearly a believer and worshiper of God, and yet she had been married five times and was currently living out of wedlock with another man. Did Christ quote the marriage and divorce laws of Moses to her? Did he condemn her to hell as sinful? Did he tell her you may never marry again? Did He tell her that to get right with God, she must leave the man she is now with and go be reconciled back to her first husband? No, he revealed Himself to her and then set her loose as evangelist to her entire town. Jesus' focus was on her eternal spiritual soul, not on the rule book regarding marriage and divorce which she had violated in her own ignorance and foolishness.

How do I, a mere human of dust, know how much light a person had when they went through their own divorces or remarriages? How do I know if God even considered them enough of a true believer at that

time to be judged by His truth and light? How do I know if that was a union made by God, or the devil, or their own corrupt flesh? Despite the command to not separate what God has joined together, we have already seen in Scripture that there are many marriage unions that were not joined by God.

Be humble enough to seek God's will, patient enough not to move forward until He makes it clear, and courageous enough to go when He says go, or stay when He says stay. Let me share a devotional on this subject from my favorite devotional book, which I believe makes my final point so clear.

### **October 19<sup>th</sup> - Streams in the Desert Devotional.**

*The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them. (Numbers 10:33)*

God sometimes does influence us with a simple touch or feeling, but not so we would act on the feeling. If the touch is from Him, He will then provide sufficient evidence to confirm it beyond the slightest doubt.

Consider the beautiful story of Jeremiah, when he felt God leading him to purchase the field at Anathoth. He did not act on his initial feeling but waited for God to completely fulfill His words to him before taking action. Then once his cousin came to him, bringing the external evidence of God's direction by making a proposal for the purchase, he responded and said, "I knew that this was the word of the Lord" (Jer. 32:8).

Jeremiah waited until God confirmed his feeling through a providential act, and then he worked with a clear view of the facts, which God could also use to bring conviction to others. God wants us to act only once we have His mind on a certain situation. We are not to ignore the Shepherd's personal voice to us, but like "Paul and his companions" (Acts 16:6) at Troas, we are to listen and also examine His providential work in our circumstances, in order to glean the full mind of the Lord. A. B. Simpson

Wherever God's finger points, His hand will clear a way.

Never say in your heart what you will or will not do but wait until God reveals His way to you. As long as that way is hidden, it is clear that there is no need of action and that He holds Himself accountable for all the results of keeping you exactly where you are. SELECTED

For God through ways we have not known, will lead His own.

### **Conclusion: You Decide**

The legalists say I am lost soul, and that the devil has deceived me into a guaranteed trip to hell if I don't repent. I, however, say I am a true follower of Jesus Christ, and that God has used both my divorce and my remarriage to Persis to bless me with life to the full in Christ, as evidenced by the fruit in my heart and life.

The temporary earthly institution of marriage is not the savior of souls, nations, or mankind. Millions of professing Christians who stay married will still end up in hell. Their lasting marriage will still find them *wanting*, of internal righteousness, at the judgment seat of Christ. Jesus Christ, living in you, filling you with abundant rivers of living water is your only salvation. If God needs to remove our idolatry of marriage, and if He needs to break a man or woman through divorce, so that He can build them back up and place His Spirit inside them in fullness, let Him do it! Let him have His way with His children, NOT our way.

I thank God for the institution of marriage and especially for mine to Persis. I hope Persis and I enjoy our marriage from God "until death do us part". However, I would rather see God allow millions more divorces between professing lukewarm, half-hearted, carnal Christians, where one spouse is freed from their spiritual

death, and finds true life in Christ, than for those millions to stay together and both people end up condemned. May God's will be done, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!

## **A Final Story of God's Blessings**

Just thirty minutes ago, as I was putting the finishing edits on this book, I found myself yelling to Persis, "*Oh my God...Oh my God...I cannot believe it!*" I was not using His name in vain, I was exclaiming praises to Him, in shock of what just happened.

I was sitting in my chair, deep in thought while writing, when suddenly I was distracted by Persis walking around the corner and into the room with a lit candle in her hands. For some strange reason, because I do not even celebrate my birthday, my mind made a connection to her carrying that candle in the room to the way a person carries a cake in the room when it's someone's birthday. I paused from my writing to tell her how weird it was, and jokingly told her what a letdown it was to realize it wasn't my birthday after all, and that there was no cake, but just one of her candles. We both laughed. A minute later, she came over to my chair, leaned forward, putting both of her hands on my shoulders, and with a big silly smile on her face she began to sing, "*Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you...*"

While she was singing, I was prompted to look down at the date on my computer, and to my absolute amazement, it was October 30<sup>th</sup> 2018, the nine-year anniversary of the day I fell on my knees and gave up 19 years of carnal Christianity, in absolute surrender to God and His will in my life. All my friends and family know, the day I was born means nothing to me, but only October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the day I died to myself and gave my whole life and will up to His. That is the day I hold as *special*. This was truly amazing, because neither Persis, nor I, had any idea what the date was today, and she was only teasing me by singing. However, I was able to tell her that it was God who prompted her to sing it, because just about 10 days earlier, I had prayed for God to bless me on October 30<sup>th</sup> with something special on my spiritual "birthday", the day I also finished this book. How Awesome is our Father in heaven!!!

May the peace and grace of Jesus Christ be yours in abundance!

Eyes on Him,  
Michael

<http://www.RelentlessHeart.com>