

LAWFUL DIVORCE

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Lawful divorce! Is there, or is there not, such a thing in the sight of God?
2. It seems that our society has reached the point that it views God's ordained marriage relationship with little or no reverence, if any thought at all!
3. This is evident for many reasons. Evident by the fact that:
 - a. Living together without the benefit of marriage is so widely practiced and so readily accepted by so many.
 - b. Same-sex marriages are being accepted by more and more, even made legal in some states in our union.
 - c. Our tax laws even encourage certain age groups to practice living together without the benefit of marriage.
 - d. The divorce rate in America hovers around 50% from year to year.
 - e. That half of those who remarry after a divorce, divorce again.
 - f. The #1 "cause" for divorce recorded in the courts in America is "irreconcilable differences," which amounts to "divorce for any and every cause," which the Lord said is contrary to God's will in Mt.19:3-6.
 - g. Divorce as taught in God's written word is not even considered as a factor perhaps by a majority of people, even by professed Bible believers!
4. Our society acts as if God's word does not even speak of or address the matter of divorce.
5. This points to our need to consider the fact that God in his written word, the Bible, does indeed address the matter, including lawful divorce, and that what he says about it is of eternal consequence!

II. DISCUSSION

A. GOD ADDRESSES THE MATTER OF DIVORCE IN THE FOLLOWING WAY.

1. In Mal.2:16, he says he hates it: “For the Lord, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment...” (KJV); ESV (marg): “For the Lord, the God of Israel, says that he hates divorce, and him who covers his garment with violence...”
2. The Lord says “Whosoever” (anyone who) divorces his or her spouse for some reason other than the cause of fornication on the part of the put away spouse commits sin, Mt.5:32; 19:3-6; 1Cor.7:10-13.
 - a. They are not even allowed to separate, except on a temporary basis, and that by mutual consent, 1Cor.7:2-5.
3. The Lord says “Whosoever” (anyone who) divorces his or her spouse for some reason other than the cause of fornication on the part of the put away spouse and marries another commits sin (“committeth adultery”), Mt.19:9; Lk.16:18.
4. The Lord says “Whosoever” (anyone who) marries the one who is divorced for the cause of fornication commits sin (“committeth adultery”), Mt.19:9; Lk.16:18; Cf. Mt.5:32.
5. The Lord says there is a cause – one cause – for lawful or scriptural divorce, which is when the innocent spouse puts away his or her spouse who is guilty of the sin of fornication, Mt.19:9; Lk.16:18.
 - a. But even in lawful divorce sin has been involved on the part of the guilty spouse – the sin of fornication.
 - b. This is the sin and the only sin which will allow the innocent spouse to divorce without committing sin!
6. The Lord says “Whosoever” (anyone who) divorces his or her spouse for the cause of fornication on the part of the put away spouse has the scriptural right to marry another who also has the scriptural right to marry, which would include:
 - a. One who has never been married.
 - b. One who has a lawful or scriptural divorce from a guilty spouse. For one must first be lawfully (scripturally) divorced before that one can possibly be lawfully (scripturally) married to another.
 - c. One whose spouse is deceased, Rom.7:1-3; 1Cor.7:39.
7. The Lord by means of the inspired Apostle Paul, in 1Cor.7:10,11 says the spouse who has divorced his or her spouse, in spite of being commanded not to do so in violation of God’s will, must do one of two things:

- a. Either remain unmarried for the rest of their life.
- b. Or be reconciled to his or her divorced spouse (i.e., remarry them).

III. CONCLUSION

1. Without a doubt, what the Lord's says about divorce should cause us to consider the seriousness of lawful and unlawful divorce.
2. It involves individuals and their salvation; it involves families; it involves society in general; it involves heaven and hell!
3. If you are contemplating divorce, reconsider it in the light of God's word and your own soul as well as that of others.
4. If you are unlawfully divorced, seek to be reconciled to your former spouse if possible; it's more and more sin if you do not!
5. If you are in a sinful, unscriptural, marriage relationship, cease your involvement at once!
6. Such things are some of the demands of repentance and forgiveness and hope of heaven! You can't afford to fail to make the effort!