

LESSON ONE - MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

CONCEPTS AND TERMS DEFINED

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A proper understanding of any subject begins with defining the terms central to the subject, and developing the proper concepts. This is especially true regarding the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage.

In this lesson we will investigate God's plan for marriage, what constitutes a marriage, and some important terms. Hopefully this exercise will go a long way in eliminating confusion, by establishing in our minds Bible terms used in Bible ways.

I. GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

- A. Going to "the beginning" (Genesis 2:18-25, Matthew 19:4-5).
 - 1. Loneliness for man not good - woman formed as a help, suitable unto man (Genesis 2:18, 22).
 - 2. Sexual intimacy (Genesis 2:24, Hebrews 13:4)
 - 3. Procreation (Genesis 1:27-28).
 - 4. Commitment - "cleave unto" one's mate (Genesis 2:24)
 - a) Cleave in Matthew 19:5 means "to join fast together, to glue, cement (W.E. Vine, EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, Vol. I, p. 196)
 - 5. Permanence - Jesus referred to God's words in Genesis 2:24 to combat the question, Is it lawful to put away for any cause (Matthew 19:3, 5).
- B. God's plan for marriage is one man for one woman for life (Ephesians 5: 31,33; I Corinthians 7: 39; Romans 7:2).

II. WHAT CONSTITUTES "MARRIAGE"

- A. Marriage is "the state of being married; relation between husband and wife; married life; wedlock, matrimony" (Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, Unabridged Second Addition, p. 1103)
- B. "Marriage is the act which unites the two parties, and matrimony is the state into which they enter" (Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, Unabridged Second Addition, p. 1103).
 - 1. Notice our term "marriage" is inclusive of the act of entering, and the life lived as husband and wife. Distinctions must be determined by context.
- C. Bible does not specifically address the question, but gives us some help in understanding what constitutes a marriage:
 - 1. Intention and agreement.
 - a) Act of leaving father and mother and cleaving to one's mate indicates intention and agreement (Matthew 19:5-6).
 - b) "Espoused" indicates agreement to be married (Matthew 1:18)
 - c) "Wife of thy covenant" (Malachi 2:14).
 - 2. Compliance with civil law and honorable social customs.

- a) Must be obedient to laws of land unless they violate God's laws (Romans 13:1-7, Acts 5:29).

- (1) Process to begin the marriage - license, etc.

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- b) "I have no husband" - woman living with a man without meeting the requirements of society or law (John 4:16-18).
- c) Marriage feast attended by Jesus illustrates that more than a mental intention was involved in marriage, but certain requirements recognized honorable by the surrounding society are to be met (John 2:1-11).
- 3. The sexual act is a blessing for the marriage, not a requirement before a couple is recognized as scripturally married.
 - a) Cohabitation takes place within marriage, not prior to marriage (Hebrews 13:4)
 - b) Joseph took Mary as his wife before he knew her sexually (Matthew 1:24-25).
- 4. Sexual union does not mean a marriage has begun.
 - a) Man who lies with a virgin was not at that point married to her, for her father had an option to either let her marry or refuse the man (Exodus 22:16-17, Genesis 34:13-14).
 - b) Man joining himself to, and being one flesh with a harlot is not marriage, for God joins two in marriage, so they can honorably be one flesh (I Corinthians 6:16, Matthew 19:6, Hebrews 13:4)
 - (1) "The word translated "joined" is in the middle voice (meaning man joins himself to the harlot) whereas the word translated "joined" in Matthew 19:6; which does refer to marriage, is in the active voice (meaning God does the joining of man and wife). Thus the man joined to an harlot is not married to her." (Divorce and Remarriage - What Does The Text Say, Donnie V. Radar, p. 12).

III. TERMS DEFINED

- A. "Bond" - "Bound" (deo)
 - 1. The "bond" is the covenant with God that "binds" husband and wife together with certain responsibilities.
 - 2. Only God can join , only God can loose (Matthew 19:6).
 - 3. Marriage and the bond are not the same. One can be "bound" to one and "married" to another (Romans 7:2-3, Mark 6:17-18).
- B. "Divorce" or "put away" (Apoluo)
 - 1. "to loose from, sever by loosening, undo...set free...used of divorce, as to dismiss from the house, to repudiate" (Joseph Henry Thayer, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament, p. 66) (Matthew 1:19, 5:31, 19:3, 7-9, Mark 10:2,4,11; Luke 16:18)

2. The ending of the marriage is divorce whether we call it "putting away" or "annulment".
3. One is still divorced even if he has put away his wife unscripturally (Matthew 5:32, 19:9).

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C. "Separation"

1. Refers to husband and wife not living together though still married to one another.
2. I Corinthians 7:5 - Separated but not divorced.

D. "Adultery" "Adulterer" (Moichos)

1. "denotes one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another" (Vines, Vol. 1, p. 33).
2. "Adultery" is a more specific term than "fornication".
 - a) Describes only a part of what is included in fornication.
 - b) Terms occasionally used interchangeably (Revelation 2:20-22).
 - c) Adultery can be committed with one's own wife (Matthew 19:9, cf. Romans 7:2-3).

E. "Fornication" (Porneia)

1. "is used of illicit sexual intercourse...it stands for or includes, adultery" (Vines, Vol. 1, p. 125).
2. "Prop. of illicit sexual intercourse in general" (Thayer, p. 532).
3. Would include homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality and incest.
4. Generally refers to unlawful intercourse of the unmarried (I Corinthians 7:2-5), but at times is applied to married people (I Corinthians 5:1, Revelation 2:20).

QUESTIONS:

1. Is procreation the only reason for marriage?
2. How do we know God planned from the beginning marriage to be a permanent relationship?
3. God's plan for marriage is _____ man for one _____ for _____ .
4. What all constitutes a marriage?
5. Does a man and a woman having sex mean they are now married?

6. I Corinthians 6:17, teaches that a Christian who cohabits with an harlot (a) is married to her, or (b) has made his body unfit as the temple of God.

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7. Why does the man in Matthew 5:28 commit "adultery" and not "fornication" ? Can a single man violate this passage by lusting after a single girl? Explain.
8. Explain how one could be "bound" to one and "married" to another.
9. A woman who puts away her husband, meeting civil requirements, is (a) only separated, (b) not really divorced in the eyes of God, (c) divorced, though God may approve or disapprove.
10. What does "divorce" mean?
11. What is the difference between "divorce" and "separation" ?
12. "Fornication does not include homosexuality, incest or bestiality. (T) (F)
13. What is the difference between "adultery" and "fornication"?