

Divorce, Remarriage, and the God Who Keeps Covenant

What Scripture Says, Where Faithful Christians Disagree, and How to Walk It Out with Grace

In several streams and conversations lately, the same questions keep coming up. Is remarriage biblical? What are the “okay” reasons to divorce? When, if ever, is it okay to remarry?

One scenario in particular stuck with me. Two people get married before either of them know Jesus. The marriage falls apart and they divorce. Years later, both of them come to faith. Now one of them has met a new person that is a godly Christian and they want to build a life with them. Are they allowed to marry? They didn’t even know what Scripture said about divorce when their first marriage ended!

I’ll be honest.. When I started digging into this, I didn’t know whether Scripture gave a one and done, case closed answer, or whether different situations changed things. I’m not a seminary-trained theologian. I’m a guy with a Bible and a microphone who wants to know what God’s Word actually says, in its entirety. What I found is that Scripture is clear on some parts of this and faithful, Bible believing Christians who love Jesus land in different places on other parts. That’s not a cop out, it’s the honest state of a question the church has wrestled with for two thousand years.

So this resource won’t hand you a verdict. It lays out what Scripture clearly teaches, walks through the key passages, presents the major views along with the reasons their holders give, works through common real life situations, and offers questions to bring before the Lord and your church. The goal is to help you think biblically about this, not to do the thinking for you.

One more thing before we start. This isn’t an abstract topic. Somebody reading this may be divorced, somebody’s parents split up, and somebody is in a marriage right now that is hurting them. If that’s you, there’s a section near the end written with you in mind.

What Scripture Makes Clear

Before we get to the disagreements, it’s worth seeing how much ground Christians share. Every view in this resource affirms these things:

God designed marriage to last a lifetime. From the beginning, marriage was one man and one woman joined as “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). When Jesus was asked about divorce, He went straight back to that design: “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6).

Divorce was never God’s ideal. Moses allowed divorce, Jesus said, “because of your hardness of heart... but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8).

Through Malachi, God reminded Israel that He Himself was “witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant” (Malachi 2:14).

Jesus rejected divorce “for any cause.” Whatever else is debated, divorcing because we’ve drifted apart, fallen out of love, or found someone else isn’t treated as a legitimate ground by any of the views in this resource.

A believer shouldn’t leave an unbelieving spouse who wants to stay. Paul is direct in Scripture. If an unbelieving spouse “consents to live with” a believer, the believer “should not divorce” (1 Corinthians 7:12–13).

A widowed believer is free to remarry. “If her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:39; see also Romans 7:2–3).

No one is required to stay in danger. Paul’s instructions anticipate that separation will sometimes happen (1 Corinthians 7:11). Even the strictest views support separating to protect a spouse and children from abuse.

Divorce is not an unforgivable sin. Paul lists adulterers among those who “will not inherit the kingdom of God,” then says: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

The real disagreement is narrower than people often think. It comes down to two questions: *Does God permit divorce for any reason? If so, which ones? When a divorce has happened, is a person free to marry again while their former spouse is still living?*

The Key Passages

A handful of passages carry most of the weight in this conversation. Here’s what each one says and why it matters.

Deuteronomy 24: Moses Regulates Divorce

Moses didn’t command divorce. He regulated a practice that was already happening. If a man divorced his wife because he “found some indecency in her,” he had to give her a written certificate of divorce. That certificate protected her. It proved she was free and the passage assumes she may go and become “another man’s wife” (v. 2). What Moses forbade was the first husband taking her back *after* she had married someone else (v. 4).

That phrase, “some indecency,” became the center of one of the biggest debates of Jesus’ day.

Malachi 2: God Is a Witness to the Covenant

Malachi confronts men who were abandoning their wives. God calls the wife “your companion and your wife by covenant” (v. 14). You may know verse 16 as “I hate

divorce,” which is how older translations like the NIV (1984) render it; the KJV says the LORD “hateth putting away.” The ESV reads it this way:

- **Malachi 2:16 (ESV)** — *“For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”*

Either way, the point stands. God takes covenant-breaking personally and He sees the one who is wronged.

Matthew 19: The “Any Cause” Question

In Jesus’ day, two famous rabbinic schools argued over what Moses’ “some indecency” meant. The school of Shammai said it meant sexual unfaithfulness. The school of Hillel read it broadly enough to allow divorce for almost anything, even if a wife ruined her husband’s dinner (Mishnah, Gittin 9:10). So when the Pharisees asked Jesus, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” (v. 3), they were asking Him to pick a side.

Jesus refused to start with Moses. He went back to creation and then He gave His answer:

- **Matthew 19:8–9 (ESV)** — *“Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”*

The disciples’ reaction tells you how seriously they heard it: “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry” (v. 10). Jesus acknowledged, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given” (v. 11).

The phrase “sexual immorality” translates the Greek word *porneia*, a broad term for sexual sin. How far it reaches is one of the questions Christians disagree about.

Matthew 5: The Exception Appears Again

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says the same thing: “everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32). This is the same sermon where Jesus traces murder back to anger and adultery back to lust (Matthew 5:21–28). He is raising the bar on all of us.

Mark 10 and Luke 16: No Exception Mentioned

- **Mark 10:11–12 (ESV)** — *“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”*

Mark and Luke (Luke 16:18) record Jesus’ teaching with no exception at all. Christians read the difference in two main ways. Some believe Matthew spells out what everyone in that world already assumed: that adultery ends a marriage. Others believe Mark and

Luke give the rule, and Matthew's exception is narrow, applying only to a specific situation such as unfaithfulness during betrothal (basically engagement). (Joseph, "being a just man," planned to "divorce her quietly" when he learned the woman he was betrothed (engaged) to was pregnant, Matthew 1:19.)

1 Corinthians 7: Paul Applies Jesus' Teaching

Paul first repeats Jesus' command:

- **1 Corinthians 7:10–11 (ESV)** — *"To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife."*

Then he takes up a situation Jesus didn't address: a believer married to an unbeliever. "To the rest I say (I, not the Lord)" isn't Paul contradicting Jesus. It's an apostle applying Jesus' teaching to a new situation that came up as the gospel spread. If the unbelieving spouse wants to stay, the believer must stay (vv. 12–14). But if the unbeliever leaves:

- **1 Corinthians 7:15 (ESV)** — *"But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace."*

What does "not enslaved" mean? Released from the marriage and free to remarry? Or released only from the obligation to fight to hold the marriage together? That question sits at the heart of the whole debate. Some also point to verses 27–28 ("Are you free from a wife? ... But if you do marry, you have not sinned"), though whether "free" there includes the divorced is itself debated. At the end of the chapter Paul adds, "A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives" (v. 39).

God Himself and a Broken Covenant

Scripture also gives us a surprising picture. God describes His relationship with Israel as a marriage, with Israel as an unfaithful wife. Through Jeremiah, He says, "for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce" (Jeremiah 3:8). Yet through Hosea, He tells the prophet, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel" (Hosea 3:1).

Both pictures matter. God knows the pain of a betrayed spouse and God's heart leans toward redemption, even when He has every right to walk away.

The Major Views

Pastors and scholars organize these views in different ways, but most fall into four broad positions. Each one is presented here the way its own defenders would present it. All four are held by people who love Jesus and take the Bible seriously.

1. The Permanence View

What it teaches. Marriage binds until death. Some who hold this view allow separation, or even a legal divorce, when there has been adultery or danger, but no one may remarry while a former spouse is living.

Why its holders believe it:

- Mark 10 and Luke 16 give Jesus' teaching with no exception, and Paul passes on "the Lord's" charge that a separated spouse "should remain unmarried or else be reconciled" (1 Corinthians 7:11).
- Paul twice says a wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives (Romans 7:2–3; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Only death ends the bond.
- Matthew's exception is read narrowly, either as referring to unfaithfulness during betrothal or as permitting separation, but not remarriage.
- The disciples' shocked reaction (Matthew 19:10) makes the most sense if Jesus was stricter than even the strictest rabbis, who allowed remarriage after a divorce for adultery.
- Most early Christian writers held this view, allowing separation for adultery, but not remarriage while a spouse was living.

Who holds it? Much of the early church; the Roman Catholic Church, which teaches that a sacramental marriage can't be dissolved (an annulment is a declaration that a valid marriage never existed, which is a different thing from divorce); and some Protestant pastors and scholars today, such as John Piper and Gordon Wenham.

The hard question. If Jesus didn't mean to permit remarriage, why does Matthew record His exception twice? What does "not enslaved" mean if the abandoned spouse is still bound? This view also asks betrayed and abandoned spouses to stay single for life because of a sin they didn't commit. Its defenders answer that Jesus Himself said this teaching was hard (Matthew 19:11–12) and that God gives grace to those who receive it.

2. The Adultery and Desertion View

What it teaches. Scripture names two grounds for divorce: sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9) and desertion by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15). When a marriage ends on one of those grounds, the spouse who was wronged is free to remarry.

Why its holders believe it:

- Jesus' exception covers the whole sentence: "whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another." If the divorce is legitimate, the remarriage isn't adultery.
- In Jesus' world, a divorce included the right to remarry by definition. The core wording of a Jewish certificate of divorce was "you are permitted to marry any man" (Mishnah, Gittin 9:3), and Deuteronomy 24:2 assumes the same.

- “Not enslaved” (1 Corinthians 7:15) means the deserted believer is released from the marriage itself, not just from chasing a spouse who has left.
- God Himself sent unfaithful Israel away “with a decree of divorce” (Jeremiah 3:8), so a spouse who divorces after adultery isn’t sinning by doing so.

Who holds it? Many of the Protestant Reformers and the confessions that followed them. The Westminster Confession (1646) says, “In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce: and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead” (24.5). Many evangelical churches hold this view today. William Heth, who once co-wrote a book defending the permanence view, later changed his mind and came to hold this one.

The hard question. What exactly counts as “sexual immorality”? What about a professing Christian who walks out? (Many churches work through Matthew 18:15–17, and the Westminster Confession speaks of “wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church, or civil magistrate.”) Then the hardest one: why should a spouse whose partner walked out be free, while a spouse whose partner stays and abuses them is not? That question has moved some in this camp toward the next view.

3. The Covenant-Breaking View

What it teaches. Adultery and desertion are examples of covenant breaking, not a complete list. Other betrayals that destroy a marriage just as surely, especially abuse and severe, persistent neglect, can also be grounds for divorce, and the wronged spouse is free to remarry.

Why its holders believe it:

- The Law protected even a slave wife. If her husband withheld “her food, her clothing, or her marital rights,” she was free to go (Exodus 21:10–11). The New Testament echoes those duties when it tells husbands to love their wives the way a man “nourishes and cherishes” his own body (Ephesians 5:28–29).
- Paul applied Jesus’ teaching to a situation Jesus didn’t address (1 Corinthians 7:12–15). That shows Jesus’ words weren’t meant as an exhaustive list of every possible case.
- Scholars like David Instone-Brewer argue that “any cause” was a technical phrase for Hillel’s new, easy divorce. Jesus rejected that ground, not every ground the Old Testament recognized.
- Abuse is desertion from the inside. The abuser has abandoned the vow while still living in the house. Paul says a man who won’t provide for his own household “has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).

Who holds it? Scholars such as Craig Keener and David Instone-Brewer. In 2019, theologian Wayne Grudem publicly changed his long held two-grounds view, arguing that divorce may be legitimate in “other circumstances that damage the marriage as severely as adultery or desertion,” including abuse. Many pastors who counsel abuse survivors hold some form of this view.

The hard question. Who decides what's severe enough? Once you move past a named list, how do you keep from sliding back into the "any cause" divorce Jesus shut down? Its defenders answer that the grounds must be as serious as adultery or desertion, persistent and unrepented of, and confirmed with the church's help, not declared by one spouse alone.

4. The Restoration View

What it teaches. Jesus' words show how seriously God takes divorce and divorce always involves sin somewhere. Jesus was exposing hearts, not writing a legal code. Like any sin, divorce can be repented of and forgiven, and a forgiven believer isn't permanently barred from marriage.

Why its holders believe it:

- Jesus' teaching on divorce in Matthew 5 sits in a sermon that traces murder back to anger and adultery back to lust. Its purpose is to show all of us our need for **grace**, not to create a permanent class of second-tier Christians.
- Forgiveness in Christ is complete: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). No other forgiven sin is treated as a lifelong bar to an ordinary life.
- Deuteronomy 24 treats a second marriage as a real marriage. The woman becomes "another man's wife" (v. 2), not a permanent adulteress.
- Jesus named the Samaritan woman's history honestly (five husbands and the man she was with wasn't her husband) and still offered her living water. She became a witness to her whole town (John 4:16–18, 39).

Who holds it? Larry Richards defended this view in *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views* and many pastors practice something close to it. The Eastern Orthodox Church reflects a similar pastoral instinct: it allows a second and even a third marriage as an exception to the rule, with a more penitential wedding service.

The hard question. Does this view take Jesus' words seriously enough? If remarriage is open after nearly any divorce once a person repents, what were Jesus' warnings about adultery actually forbidding? Critics worry it leads to cheap grace: divorce, remarry, say sorry. Defenders answer that real repentance bears real fruit (Matthew 3:8) and can't be used as a formula.

What Each View Is Protecting

It helps to notice what each view is trying to guard:

- **Permanence** guards the weight of the covenant: "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."
- **Adultery and desertion** guards the plain reading of Jesus' exception and Paul's "not enslaved."

- **Covenant-breaking** guards the vulnerable, especially spouses and children in danger.
- **Restoration** guards the reach of grace for sinners who repent.

Each of those is something God cares about. That's part of why faithful people land in different places.

If you want to go deeper, two books let scholars from different views make their case and respond to each other: *Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views* (InterVarsity Press, 1990) and *Remarriage after Divorce in Today's Church: 3 Views* (Zondervan, 2006).

Common Situations

Real questions rarely come as “Which of the four views is correct?” They come as a story. Here's how the views tend to apply to situations that come up again and again. None of this is a ruling on anyone's marriage. Think of it as a map that shows where each road goes.

“We just aren't happy anymore.”

This is one of the clearest answers in this whole discussion. Growing apart, falling out of love, feeling incompatible, or meeting someone who “really gets me” isn't a biblical ground for divorce under any of these four views. It's the “any cause” divorce Jesus rejected.

That doesn't mean the pain isn't real. A cold, lonely marriage is a real kind of suffering. But the biblical path runs through repentance, honest counseling, and pursuing your spouse again, not toward the exit (1 Corinthians 7:10–11; Ephesians 5:25).

“My spouse was unfaithful.”

Three of the four views permit divorce after adultery, with the betrayed spouse free to remarry. The permanence view allows separation, but not remarriage while the other spouse is living.

What every view agrees on: divorce after adultery is permitted, not commanded. Many marriages have survived adultery and even grown stronger through real repentance and hard work and Hosea stands as a picture of a love that pursues. Forgiveness is required of every believer. Reconciliation is a different thing. It depends on repentance and rebuilt trust and it isn't always possible or safe. Don't let anyone rush you in either direction.

“My spouse walked out.”

If an unbelieving spouse leaves, Paul says, “let it be so” (1 Corinthians 7:15). The adultery and desertion, covenant-breaking, and restoration views all see the abandoned

believer as free to remarry. The permanence view says the believer doesn't have to chase the one who left, but should remain unmarried.

If the one who left claims to be a Christian, many churches follow Jesus' process in Matthew 18:15–17. If the deserting spouse refuses every call to repent, they are treated “as a Gentile and a tax collector” (v. 17) and Paul's words about an unbelieving spouse are then applied. Either way, this isn't a call to make alone. Let your church walk through it with you.

“My spouse is hurting me.”

Every view agrees on the first step: get safe. Scripture never requires a spouse or children to stay in danger and Paul's own instructions anticipate separation (1 Corinthians 7:11). Abuse can be physical, but it can also be sexual, emotional, or financial control. It doesn't have to leave a bruise to be real.

- If you're in immediate danger, call 911.
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline is available 24/7 at 1-800-799-7233, by texting START to 88788, or at thehotline.org.
- Tell a pastor you trust. If the first one minimizes what's happening, tell another.

The question of divorce and remarriage can wait until everyone is safe. When it comes, the views differ. The covenant-breaking view treats abuse as grounds for divorce. Many in the adultery and desertion camp treat persistent, unrepentant abuse as a form of desertion. The permanence view permits separation, but not remarriage.

“My spouse is addicted to pornography.”

This one comes up more and more. The word behind “sexual immorality” in Jesus' exception is *porneia*, a broad word for sexual sin. Some Christians believe persistent, unrepentant pornography use falls under it; Wayne Grudem included incorrigible pornography addiction in his 2019 list. Others believe *porneia* refers to physical sexual acts with another person. They point out that Jesus says a lustful look is adultery “in his heart” (Matthew 5:28) without making every lustful look grounds for divorce. If it were, very few marriages would be safe.

The common ground is that pornography is a real betrayal that wounds deeply. It isn't “just a guy thing.” In fact, the rise in women struggling with this sin has been increasingly greater. The path forward is confession, accountability, counseling, and a spouse who is fighting it is in a very different place than one who refuses to stop.

“We divorced before we were saved.”

Two people marry as unbelievers, divorce, and later each comes to Christ. Now one of them wants to marry a fellow believer.

First, “we didn't know the rule” isn't really the key issue. Jesus grounded marriage in creation, not in the church (Matthew 19:4–6) and Paul told believers married to unbelievers that those marriages stand (1 Corinthians 7:12–14). So Scripture treats a

marriage between two unbelievers as a real marriage. Whatever sin was in the divorce is fully forgiven in Christ, whether they knew better or not. The real question is whether that first marriage still binds them now.

The case that they're free to marry:

- “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Their former spouse is an unbeliever who is gone, which closely fits Paul’s words that “the brother or sister is not enslaved” (1 Corinthians 7:15).
- If the former spouse has remarried, going back isn’t an option anyway (Deuteronomy 24:4).

The case for caution:

- Forgiven isn’t the same as erased. 2 Corinthians 5:17 describes a new identity in Christ, not the cancellation of every past commitment. A new believer is forgiven, but he still owes on his car loan.
- The permanence view makes no exception for a divorce that happened before salvation. Marriage binds until death either way.

In practice, many evangelical pastors would counsel that this person is free to marry a fellow believer, especially if reconciliation isn’t realistically possible. A wise pastor will still ask about the details: Who left whom? Was there adultery? Has the former spouse remarried? Is there any real path back?

“I’m the one who ended my marriage.”

If you were the one who was unfaithful or walked away, start with repentance. Before God first and where it’s appropriate and safe, with your former spouse. If your former spouse is still unmarried and reconciliation is possible, several of these views would call you to pursue it (“or else be reconciled,” 1 Corinthians 7:11). If they’ve remarried, honor that marriage and don’t try to undo it.

Whether the spouse who broke the covenant may remarry is where the views are most cautious. The permanence view says no. The Westminster Confession grants remarriage to “the innocent party,” and many in that tradition stop there. Others, including many in the restoration view, believe that after genuine repentance and time, God’s grace reaches here too. This is one of the places where Scripture says the least directly, and humility is the right posture for everyone.

“I’ve already remarried.”

Here there’s broad agreement: don’t divorce again to fix the past. Even John Piper, who holds the permanence view, teaches that a couple in a second marriage should not separate. They should confess any sin in how the marriage began and stay faithful. Deuteronomy 24 treats a second marriage as a real marriage and leaving it would break another covenant.

Your marriage today is a covenant before God. Honor it and live in the freedom of Romans 8:1.

“Can a divorced person serve in church leadership?”

Paul says an overseer must be “the husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). The Greek phrase is literally “a one-woman man,” and Christians read it at least three ways: never divorced and remarried; not a polygamist; or a man who is faithful to his wife now, with a proven pattern of faithfulness. Churches differ on this and it applies to the office of elder or overseer. It says nothing about whether a divorced believer can serve Jesus, love people, and share the gospel. They absolutely can.

Questions to Bring Before the Lord

Because so much of this depends on the details, the most helpful thing this resource can offer is a set of questions. Work through them prayerfully and honestly, and preferably not alone. Write your answers down and bring them to your pastor.

About Scripture

- Have I read all the key passages (Matthew 5 and 19, Mark 10, Luke 16, 1 Corinthians 7), not just the ones that support what I’m hoping for?
- Which view seems most faithful to all of them together? Can I explain why?
- Am I searching for the truth, or for permission? “The heart is deceitful above all things” (Jeremiah 17:9).

About My Marriage

- What actually happened? Was there adultery, desertion, or abuse, or did we simply grow apart?
- Who left whom? What was my part in it?
- Has reconciliation been honestly pursued? Is it still possible and is it safe? “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:18).
- Has my former spouse remarried?

About My Heart

- Have I repented of my own sin in the marriage, even if my spouse’s sin was greater?
- Have I forgiven? Forgiveness is required of me (Ephesians 4:32). Reconciliation isn’t always possible.
- Have I grieved and healed, or am I running from pain into a new relationship?
- Would I still follow Jesus if the answer turned out to be “wait,” or even “no”?

About the Road Ahead

- Is the person I'm considering a committed follower of Jesus? Paul's words to widows apply to any believer considering marriage: "only in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:39; see also 2 Corinthians 6:14).
- Have I brought this to my pastor or elders and to people who know the whole story? "In an abundance of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14).
- Can I move forward with a clear conscience? "Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).
- What does my church teach and am I willing to walk this out under its care?

A Word About Following the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit does lead God's people. Jesus promised that "the Spirit of truth... will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13) and God gives wisdom "generously to all without reproach" to anyone who asks (James 1:5). A few guardrails help us hear Him well:

- **The Spirit never leads against the Word He inspired.** If "the Spirit told me" contradicts every faithful reading of Scripture, it wasn't the Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 4:1).
- **Strong desire isn't the same as leading.** When we want something badly, our hearts are very good at hearing yes.
- **The Spirit leads through the church, not around it.** A decision made in isolation, hidden from the people who love you, is a warning sign.
- **Give it time.** Patience is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Big decisions made in the rawness of grief or loneliness rarely age well.

For the rest of us: when a brother or sister has done this work honestly, with Scripture open and their church involved, and lands on a view that faithful Christians hold, we owe them **grace**, even if we'd land somewhere else on the decision. "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls" (Romans 14:4).

When This Comes Up on Stream

Questions about divorce almost never stay theoretical. When someone types in chat "is it a sin to remarry?", there's usually a story behind it.

- **Assume there's pain in the room.** Some of your viewers are divorced. Some are children of divorce. Some are in marriages that are hurting them right now. Speak like they're listening, because they are.
- **Answer the general question in public, and take the personal one somewhere private.** Something like: "Great question, and faithful Christians see this differently. If this is about your own situation, I'd love to talk more. DM

me and I'd strongly encourage you to bring it to your pastor too if you haven't already."

- **Don't rule on someone's marriage from chat.** You're hearing one side of a story in a few hundred characters. "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame" (Proverbs 18:13).
- **Represent the views fairly.** Saying "Christians who love Jesus disagree on this" isn't weakness. It builds trust and it keeps you from binding consciences where Scripture hasn't.
- **If abuse comes up, stop and put safety first.** Don't debate divorce theology with someone who may be in danger. Share the hotline, encourage them to call 911 if they're in immediate danger and follow up privately.
- **Point people to a local church.** You can walk with someone online, but a decision this big needs pastors and elders who can know the whole story and walk with them over time in person.

A Word to Moderators

- **Watch for shaming.** A viewer who shares that they're divorced shouldn't get piled on. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).
- **Redirect ex-bashing.** Chat isn't the place to air a former spouse's sins. Gently steer the conversation back.
- **Handle baiting like any other disruption.** Some people will use this topic to start fights. Treat that behavior the way you would anywhere else.

To the Person Who Is Divorced

If you've been through a divorce, whether you were betrayed, abandoned, or the one who walked away, please hear this: **you are not a second-class Christian. You are not damaged goods. Your story isn't over.**

God is not distant from what you've been through. He described Himself as a faithful husband whose bride walked away (Jeremiah 3:8) and He speaks tenderly to people who carry exactly that kind of shame:

- **Isaiah 54:4–6 (ESV)** — *"Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God."*

If you were the one who sinned, there's forgiveness for you too. Not partial, probationary forgiveness. **Full forgiveness.** "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

If your church has made you feel like a cautionary tale instead of a beloved brother or sister, I'm sorry. That's our failure as The Church, not the gospel's. "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

Marriage Points Beyond Itself

Paul says something remarkable about marriage:

- **Ephesians 5:31–32 (ESV)** — *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*

Every human marriage, even the best one, is a signpost pointing to something bigger: Christ, the faithful Bridegroom and His people. That's why God takes marriage so seriously. It's also why no human marriage can carry the full weight of our hope. Every earthly marriage ends one way or another. Christ never fails, never leaves, and never betrays His bride.

Whatever your story (married, divorced, remarried, single, or widowed), the marriage that finally matters is the one Revelation celebrates: "the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7). In that marriage, no one is abandoned, no one is betrayed, and no vow is ever broken.

That's where this whole conversation ends. Not with a rule, but with a Bridegroom.

Hold marriage in honor. Hold one another with grace. Hold fast to the One who will never let go of you.

This resource was born from a real conversation in digital ministry.

"I will never leave you nor forsake you."

— Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)