

## Marital Infidelity Has Consequences

Gary McDade

Jesus said, "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Mt. 19:6-9).

In *The Home As God Would Have It* from the fourth annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship, the late, lamented J. Noel Merideth wrote, "In his comments on Matthew 19:9, H. Leo Boles said, 'Unlawful intercourse with any other person permits the innocent party to break the marriage tie; the guilty party has deserted forever the marriage partner; and has become unfit for further association; the guilty party can never again enter a pure and lawful marriage covenant' (*Commentary on Matthew*, Gospel Advocate Company, p. 389). A.T. Robertson says, 'Jesus by implication, as in 5:31, does allow remarriage of the innocent party, but not of the guilty one. Certainly Jesus has lifted the whole subject of marriage and divorce to a new level, far beyond the petty contentions of the schools of Hillel and Shammai' (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. I, Broadman Press, p. 155). J.W. McGarvey in his more mature years wrote, 'The law of divorce will be found at Deut. 24:1-4. Jesus explains that this law was given by Moses on account of the hardness of the people's heart; i.e., to prevent greater evils (Matt. 19:8). The law permitted the husband to put away the wife when he found "some unseemly thing in her." But Jesus here limits the right of divorce to cases of unchastity, and if there be a divorce of any other ground, neither the man nor the woman

can marry again without committing adultery (Matt. 19:9). Such is Jesus' modification of the Old Testament law, *and in no part of the New Testament is there any relaxation as to the law here set forth.* (Emphasis mine: JNM). It is implied that divorce for unchastity breaks the marriage bond, and it is therefore held almost universally, both by commentators and moralists, that the innocent party to such a divorce can marry again. Of course the guilty party could not, for no one is allowed by law to reap the benefits of his own wrong' (*The Fourfold Gospel*, Standard Publishing Foundation, p. 242)" ("I Corinthians 7 Does Not Contradict Matthew 19:9," pp. 213-214).

In the same volume, Andrew Connally wrote, "The guilty fornicator forfeits his rights forever to have a scriptural marriage (Matt. 19:9).

"They who are guilty of such have broken the first and oldest law of God to man (Gen. 2:24), 'One man and his own one woman for life.'

"The very design of God to prevent fornication has been profaned (1 Cor. 7:2) and this did not keep the guilty from committing such terrible sin, Cf. 1 Cor. 6:18.

"God's covenant has been violated, broken and profaned (Matt. 19:6).

"Therefore, God hates it (Mal. 2:16).

"God alone, then, has the right to affix the penalty.

"God demands that the guilty repent in order to be forgiven.

"The act of remarriage by the fornicator to anyone, ever, is forbidden (Matt. 19:9b).

"Esau is God's example of the punishment levied upon the fornicator (Heb. 2:14-17).

"There is the plain warning of the danger of falling short of eternal life (vs. 15).

"'Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright. For ye know that even when

he afterwards desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place for a change of mind in his father, though he sought it diligently with tears.'

"Surely Esau could be saved, but never again enjoy his birthright, regardless of what he did (or how many false teachers ridiculed the ideal!), it was irretrievable!

"Esau never committed the sin of fornication, as far as the scriptures reveal, but he was profane—'unholy, a despiser, a scorner' of his birthright. The mention of the fornicator in this condition is *no accident*. The married person who becomes a fornicator puts himself into the same irretrievable position Esau was in—therefore, beware lest you fall short of the Grace of God. We believe this is God's irretrievable position of the fornicator.

"Thus, in verse 12, we see the wisdom of remaining a 'eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake.' When men want to go to heaven worse than they want sex, a lot of our problems in this realm will be solved" ("It Is False That One Can Be Unscripturally Divorced And Unscripturally Married Again And Continue In That Relationship Without Further Sin," pp. 229-230).

So, "marital infidelity has consequences" that must not be ignored by faithful elders, preachers, and members of the church of Christ if ever there will be a glimmer of hope of rekindling the moral fiber of a great nation that has gone the way of the great nations of the past into insufferable immorality. How long will it be, if ever, till the command of Jesus is honored when he stated, "Whom therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"?

### **Summary**

A person guilty of adultery in a marriage may not remarry.

A person marrying someone with a living spouse commits adultery in so doing unless that person is the innocent party having put away a spouse guilty of fornication.

"The act of remarriage by the fornicator to *anyone, ever*, is forbidden."

"Marital infidelity has consequences."