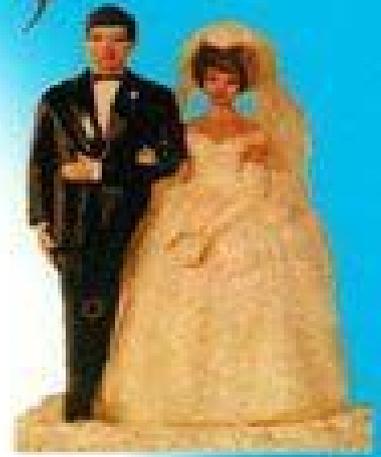


Marriage,



Divorce

and

Remarriage



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Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

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PREFACE

The following message has been transcribed from taped lectures, so naturally it will be deficient in many respects; no man's speaking vocabulary is equal to his reading or writing vocabulary. However, the essential things that deal with the Bible doctrines of separation, marriage, divorce, and remarriage are on these tapes.

There will be much opposition to the material contained therein by apostate Fundamentalists who have been raised and nurtured on the Roman Catholic idea of marriage: i.e., that a CEREMONY is a marriage and a "divorce" is a decree from a court—neither of which is true in any sense of the word. The Bible is still by far the most radical Book ever printed, and the *AV 1611* is quite able to correct the "original Greek" in these matters or any other matter. Those who believe in "verbally inspired originals" but do not believe in the Bible they are called to preach will never be able to sort out truth from error, regardless of their educational qualifications. The *AV* text will always throw more light on the truth than any unavailable, unread unknowables. The truths given here are derived from believing the text as it stands, without referring to Greek or Hebrew for anything, without taking any verse out of context, without referring to any "more accurate translation," without referring to any "qualified scholar," without adding or subtracting one word from the *AV* text, and above all, without consulting any man or any man's reputation as a teacher for any of the material contained therein.

We deal here with the word of God and the WORDS of God, which we profess to have, to be able to read, believe, teach, and practice. The teaching which follows is a teaching which I taught in 1951 (two years after my conversion), 1961 (two years after my partner deserted me), and right up to the present. We have never been guilty of altering the truth to suit anyone or to line it up with their traditions or "historical positions," no matter how holy and pious they might sound. Truth is truth. Facts are stubborn things. Light rejected becomes lightning. You may reject the following Biblical facts at your own peril. You will take the risk, not the Bible believer.

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Now, this particular message deals with a subject that has been requested by many pastors and teachers up and down the United States, and by many of my friends in the ministry who are not preachers or teachers. This message deals with the matters of marriage, divorce, separation, and remarriage.

At the beginning, let me make a few observations which might be necessary as a sort of preface to the sermon. The first of these observations is that in this study, as in all other Bible studies, we will never refer to the Greek or Hebrew to prove a point. Our reason for doing this is that we have observed through the years that every man who ever got a false teaching from the Bible eventually had to change the *King James* text in order to bolster his teaching. There is no way that a man can stand with the *King James* text as it stands, where it stands, in the context in which it appears, and get tangled up in false doctrine. If a man is ever found teaching a false doctrine, believing and using nothing but a *King James Bible*, he will be taking a text out of context every time he approaches the threshold of heresy. In short: for no reason are we going to pervert the word of God to make it *teach* anything we *believe*. Our manner of practice has been, from our youth up, to adjust our beliefs to what the Bible says, and never bother telling anybody what it *teaches* until first of all we find out what it *says*. We are to believe what it *says*. If what it says is contrary to our *beliefs*, our business is to adjust our beliefs to what it says, not to adjust what it says to our beliefs.

Now, I say that because the subject we are approaching is a very delicate one; and I say that because when such a subject like this is broached, the Pharisee's Union will immediately be ready with the response, "Oh, this is a new modern teaching that is meant to adapt itself to this age of lower standards." That is, the Pharisees have their standards, and the violation of one of *their* standards is almost an unpardonable sin.

Let me also preface my remarks by saying two other things. The first of these is that what I'm about to say (documented by the word of God), I have taught from the word of God since 1952. I was saved in 1949. It took me about three years to get all this Bible material together that I am about to discuss. Not once in my ministry from 1952 to 1980 have I ever varied in what I am about to say. Nor have I ever changed any verse to prove what I am about to say, nor have I ever had to. I never had to change one verse to make it *say* what I am about to *teach*. What I am about to teach is quite revolutionary in some Fundamental circles, and it is not a justification of anybody's sins; it is Bible doctrine. If you don't accept it, *you're* the sinner. Your problem will be how to justify yourself at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The last thing I would like to say is that for some peculiar reason, sins of sex hold some special fondness or favorite place in the heart of Fundamentalists, so that many of them have some funny idea that sins of sex are unforgivable sins. Now, I will show you what I mean.

If you talk to the average Fundamentalist—take any thirty-five at random—you would find this peculiar teaching. For example: if a saved woman deserted a saved man and went off and ran around the country living like the Devil for awhile, and then she stayed single or else ran around the country for awhile and then got married, then that saved man whom she deserted would have to remain a perpetual eunuch until she was dead. Now, if that seems like a misrepresentation of the facts, it only seems like that because I have, for the sake of a joke, reversed the procedure. What the Pharisee actually teaches is that if a saved woman has a man leave her, and he runs around the country and goes off and marries somebody else, then that saved woman can never remarry until her former husband is dead. Therefore, she must remain a perpetual virgin. That's the teaching.

Now, this teaching is taught not only by Harold Sighthler (a fine Christian man who loves the Bible and professes to believe it), but also by Dr. Theodore Epp, and by several famous radio preachers. Many of these good, godly men are Spirit-filled men whom God has used. If they had one thing wrong with their beliefs, it would be simply this: they have the inability to see where God has made allowances in His Book for other people besides themselves when it comes to matters of mercy.

So let me say before proceeding: (1) I never recommend divorce to anybody. *Now, did you hear that?* You finally got it in print, didn't you? Now, don't you go up and down this country and say Pete Ruckman is trying to justify this and that, and trying to give people an alibi to do this and that. I don't recommend divorce to anybody, let alone a Christian couple. I recommend people forgive and forget and compromise their "convictions" with each other and try to get along and live together. (2) I thank God for ever Christian man or woman who has stayed happily married or kept the marriage ties together through a period of thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty years. If you've only had one *ceremony* and remained true to the woman that you took that ceremony with, thank God for you. (You notice I didn't say "marriage"? You have to be careful with words, did you know that? Some of our Fundamentalists are rather careless with words. Some of them think a *marriage* is a marriage *ceremony*, did you know that? That is a Roman Catholic teaching—that marriage is a *sacrament*—and when you take the sacrament, that is when you're joined. People are funny, aren't they?) As I was saying, if you're a woman and you've had one marriage ceremony, and you've been true to the man with whom you had that ceremony, thank God for you. I mean that with all my heart. Some of my dearest and closest friends in the ministry have only been through one marriage ceremony. They never had two of them; they've never got divorce papers; they're still living together as man and wife. I thank God for every one of them. More power to them.

Now, shall we see what the Bible says about marriage, divorce, separation, and remarriage? The classic chapter for this is 1 Corinthians 7, which deals with these matters. If you'll turn to 1 Corinthians 7, you will find the following things apparent. In verses 1-2, it is good for a man to stay single. **"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."**

In verse 7, Paul says as far as he was concerned, it would be good for a man to stay single. **"For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper**

gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.”

Condition: verse 9, if you can't stay single, get married. It is better to marry than to burn. **“But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.”**

Now, this much is clear. That isn't all. In 1 Corinthians 7:7, you read that certain men have a gift for staying single, and some don't. **“For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.”**

This corroborates with what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said in Matthew 19:11-12. **“But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”**

So the first admonition is for a person to stay *single*. Paul not only gives this advice to young men who haven't been married; but he also says in 1 Corinthians 7:8, **“I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.”** And again to the widow in verse 40, **“But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.”** That is, she is happier staying *single*. Now, that rule is clear. There couldn't be any argument about that rule. That rule is, it is better to stay single if you can; but if you can't, it is perfectly proper to get married. That much is clear.

Now, what is not so clear about it (comparing scripture with scripture) is that the Bible defines marriage as a physical matter in 1 Corinthians 7:9. **“But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.”** Did you notice that? There are some Fundamentalists who seem to ignore that. The marriage has to do with man and woman coming together lest they “burn” incontinently in the matter of lust. How do we know this? Look at the context—1 Corinthians 7:5, **“Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”** Now, if there's any doubt in your mind about the physicalness of marriage, notice, in the verse I quoted back in Matthew 19:12, the Holy Spirit's comment on His own writing. **“For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb [physical!]: and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men [Why, that's physical!]: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.”** Why, a eunuch is a man who doesn't bear children. *The whole thing is physical.*

Now, that's very important to notice, because Christ said that a marriage is where “flesh joins flesh.” Matthew 19:5, **“And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?”** Moses said that a marriage is where “flesh joins flesh.” Genesis 2:23-24, **“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and**

shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Paul said that’s where “flesh joins flesh.” Ephesians 5:31, **“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”** Then Paul makes this remarkable statement in 1 Corinthians 6:16, **“What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.”** So at this place the twentieth century “historic Fundamentalists” part company with the Bible. In the Bible, a “marriage” is where flesh joins flesh to make one body. *That fact is incontestable.* You can’t do anything about it. This explains why “fornication” is warned against in 1 Corinthians 6:18. **“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”** And this thoroughly explains what Jesus Christ said in Matthew 19:9, **“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.”**

So here we have the root of the problem, and this problem evidently forms a great subconscious burden to the modern fundamentalist Pharisees who think that their outward conduct justifies their theological opinions.

Doesn’t it occur to you to be rather strange that when Jesus Christ spoke about these matters, He spoke about these matters suddenly, without warning, *to the Pharisees*? The warning is in Matthew 19, but look at this sudden eruption in Luke 16. Right in the middle of Luke 16, in talking about the law and the prophets and John, Christ suddenly says in Luke 16:18, **“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”** The context was this, Luke 16:15, **“And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”** Don’t you find that significant about “God knowing the hearts” in view of the fact that the same Saviour who spoke to the same crowd about the same matter said in another place, **“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”** (Matt. 5:28)?

What’s the context of that one? *Why, it’s the righteousness of the Pharisees.* Matthew 5:20, **“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”** Now, these facts (which are Biblical, doctrinal truths constituting sound doctrine) are going to be laid down before we can erect any sort of a structure or framework that deals with marriage, divorce, separation, and remarriage. For the apostate Fundamentalist who has itching ears and has turned away from sound doctrine, we’re going to say, “Run on, sonny, before you get hit in the traffic.” (And we say that with charity, of course!)

The Bible believer must face something. He must face the fact that in God’s sight: (1) A marriage is not just a marriage *ceremony*. (2) A marriage ceremony is not necessarily *marriage*. (3) Marriage in the Bible is a physical affair where *flesh joins flesh*. (4) Fornication with a whore constitutes *that much of a marriage*, flesh joining flesh.

Therefore, if a man lived a life of fornication and only had one marriage ceremony, he could pass off as only “having one wife,” whereas he had dozens; and that’s what the

Pharisees were doing. The Lord knew it; that's why He said what He said, and it was said to the Pharisees.

Don't you know that bunch who got upset when Paul wrote down that fornication was "flesh joining flesh"? Don't you know when they brought that woman to Jesus Christ in John 8, somebody like to had a *conniption fit*? Did you know to this day the Westcott and Hort Greek text and Nestle's Greek text have omitted the first nine verses of John 8? Why? It deals with sex. You know what happened there. The Pharisees (that's the bunch we're dealing with here), brought a woman to Christ and said, "This woman was caught in the act." That is, she was caught in the act of *adultery*. Then they said, **"Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"**

Now, the idea behind this thing was, if He said, "Don't stone her," He'd make a liar out of Moses, and then they would get Him; and if He said, "Do stone her," then the people would think, "Well, what about that! There He is, a friend of publicans and sinners, forgiving and having mercy on sinners, having a sinner killed." But Christ stooped down and wrote something on the ground, and when He got done writing, they all left. Why did they leave? Well, as sure as you live and breathe, He wrote Leviticus 20:10 on the ground. Did you ever read Leviticus 20:10? Now, stop and think a minute. They brought that woman, and they said, "We caught this woman in the act." All right, gentlemen, if you caught the *woman* in the act, where was the *man*? How did he get away, and how were you left with just the woman? Leviticus 20:10 says, **"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."** Moses didn't write, "Stone the woman." He said, "Stone the man and the woman." Now, how do you suppose those Pharisees caught the *woman* without catching the *man*? The Bible is an interesting book, isn't it? It certainly does throw a lot of light on "Christian Education," wouldn't you say? You know why they didn't catch that man? Because it was a setup. He was probably one of them. It was a frame-up. **"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last"** (v. 9). The oldest left first: he had more to do with cooking up the plot!

All right, marriage in the Bible is primarily a physical affair. The first marriage has no preacher, no ring, no ceremony, no license. Once you say this, the modern apostate Fundamentalist will say, "Oh, then you approve of common law marriage." (See how they think?) The modern apostate Fundamentalist, trained at a Christian school, is unbalanced. He is afraid of the Bible. When you start along these lines, his mind will begin to hop and skip and jump like a scared jackrabbit with a pack of hounds at his heels, trying to find some way or alibi or excuse or reason to reject what's coming. So once you say what I just said, he'll put that in. This brings up an important question: "So what?" If that's what the Bible says about it (and that's what it says), and if those are the Biblical facts (and they are), then what does *your opinion* about it amount to? I'll answer you: "Absolutely nothing."

Nobody said they were in favor of common law marriage. The laws of the state (Rom. 13:1-5) are to be obeyed. Nobody said anything about "shacking up" with someone and calling that a marriage. Paul said that if a man is saved, he should be willing to live honestly before men, manifesting a good conscience openly in the sight of all men. There

are other verses that take care of that thing which some of you folks are troubled about.

But this brings us to the great hang-up of the modern apostate Fundamentalist. The hang-up may be described as this: Whenever he finds a truth, he gets so anxious to get that truth across and to enforce it *that he is willing to pervert the word of God to get it across*. That is, the big thing today among apostate Fundamentalists is their *ministries*, not the *Book*. If it comes to the sacrifice of a standard that's been used in *building a ministry*, or *the word of God*, they'll sacrifice the *word of God* every time. The important thing in many "Bible believing" schools and colleges is not the Bible; it's the *college*. The most important thing in many "Bible believing" churches is not the Bible; it's the *church*. Have you noticed that?

So these fellows (in order to maintain only one marriage and one spouse throughout a lifetime—which is a good standard) will pervert the word of God to prove it, just like they pervert the word of God to try to keep short haircuts on their congregation. To them the Bible is a *tool* for attaining *means or ends*; it is not an end within itself. To them the Bible is not the supreme, absolute, infallible authority and judge and guide of their lives; the Bible is a *tool* whereby they *carry out their purposes and plans*, which become the authoritative guide. You got it? Do you see what we mean, jellybean?

All right, we have established here the Bible truth that marriage, in the word of God, is *primarily* a matter of flesh joining flesh, which is manifest by two important Biblical facts that constitute sound doctrine. When speaking of marriage, Christ likens it to eunuchs who cannot have children physically, and Paul likens it to joining your body to a harlot. With this in mind, let us begin in Matthew 19:4-6. **“And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain [that's two] shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain [that's two], but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”** Now, because this quotation is repeated during marriage ceremonies, some “historic Fundamentalists” have a funny idea that when two people are standing at an altar, *God is joining them together*. Can you imagine anything more sick than that? I wonder where you could have gotten that from? Why, the context was Adam and Eve, in verse 4. Now, how do you explain these apostate Fundamentalists doing the same thing to the word of God that a Campbellite or a Catholic priest does? Taking the verse slap out of context to where it has nothing to do with the context at all; isn't that a peculiar thing? The context was Adam and Eve. She was taken from his body. It was a body; *physical*, flesh and bone contact, and God did it.

Now, is there any Fundamentalist present who is apostate enough to tell me that when two unsaved people get married at an altar that *God is joining them together*? Okay, let's try this one. Is there any preacher reading these words who thinks that when a *saved woman* marries an *unsaved man* that *God is joining them together* when they take the vows? You wouldn't go that far, would you?

You see, when the modern “historic Fundamentalist” takes his “historic” stand on “divorce and remarriage,” he puts himself at cross currents, not only to one or two verses, but the entire teaching of marriage in the word of God. You couldn't look into the face of a saved woman and tell her it was *God* who joined her to her husband, if he were an

unsaved man, because He commanded her *not* to join her body to that man, and *she* did it.

Now, Matthew 19:7-8, **“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.”** Well, what is this business here? Why did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement? Where is *that* found? Isn’t it strange how an apostate Fundamentalist will come right down there and say, “Only one marriage, only one wife, for a lifetime,” and then refuse to find out *where the divorcement came from under Moses* and just dismiss it? I would like to know how you saved people are going to dismiss it when it is spoken of in Romans 7! You say it was the Old Testament law; well, you had better look again at Romans 7:1, **“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.”** Now, do you see the mess these fellows got themselves into? When they threw out the cross-references to Matthew 19:7-8 on the grounds that all that was “Old Testament” (therefore the law was past), and you could no longer have a writing of divorcement for anything, you were told that the very place where Christ was referring to *applies to a man and a woman in a Gentile church in the Body of Christ* (Rom. 7:1-3). In view of that, don’t you think you’d better go back and see what it said? Let’s do it, shall we? After all, Paul said in Romans 7, **“I speak to them that know the law.”** Since the modern apostate Fundamentalist (who teaches that a woman has two or three “living husbands,” or a man has two or three “living wives”) doesn’t know the law, then surely we are in a better position to expound Romans 7 than he is. Shall we try it? Deuteronomy 24:1, **“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found *some uncleanness* in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.”** Now, this is what the Pharisees were referring to in Matthew 19 (which Christ discusses in Matt. 19 and to which Paul referred to in Rom. 7). This is why this passage is never looked up nor referred to by “Fundamentalists.” The only man who referred to it was Theodore Epp, who went back here and picked up the passage and tried to convince his listeners that this referred to a man who was *engaged* and who hadn’t gotten married yet, so when they first got married, he found out that his woman was not a virgin. But that’s not found anywhere in the passage.

Let’s look at the passage. Deuteronomy 24:1, **“When a man hath *taken* a wife, and *married* her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, [because why?] because he hath found *some uncleanness* in her....”** Why, there wasn’t any statement about her not being a “virgin,” or having stepped out with another man. It said **“*some uncleanness*.”** That means *anything* he didn’t like. How do you know? Because the *New Testament passage said that’s what it was*. The New Testament passage said, **“Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives”** (Matt. 19:8). **“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife *for every cause*?”** (Matt. 19:3). Now, look at that! The bill of divorcement spoken of in Matthew 19:7, **“They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?”** is the

bill of divorcement in Deuteronomy 24:1, **“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found *some uncleanness* in her: then let him write her a *bill of divorcement*, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.”** The **“every cause”** of Matthew 19:3 is the **“some uncleanness”** of Deuteronomy 24:1; yet Theodore Epp threw out both references, and pulled the verse out of context to prove “one marriage,” and then tried to prove it only had reference to a fellow being *engaged* and marrying a woman who had already been lain with. Why, Theodore Epp, you old Bible twisting Campbellite, you! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, son! *The very idea of trying to make that word of God line up with your private interpretation taught by the Roman Catholic church.*

Now, many apostate Fundamentalists have borrowed this private interpretation of Theodore Epp’s, and they have written tracts all over this country trying to prove that the only cause for a “bill of divorcement” in the time of Moses was the fact that if a man was *engaged* to a woman and found out that she wasn’t a “virgin,” he could get rid of her. There isn’t a teaching in the Church of Christ or the Seventh-Day Adventist or the Charismatics that does any more dishonour to sound doctrine than that.

In the very context you just read in Deuteronomy 24, you’ll find that in verse 3, a man can give his wife a bill of divorcement because *he doesn’t like her*. **“And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house....”** Those Pharisees knew that when they asked the question of Jesus Christ and said, **“Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”** Now, this goes to show the length to which some “godly,” dedicated Fundamentalists will go in order to teach an unsound, non-Biblical heresy. In Deuteronomy 24:1-3, it is plainly *not* fornication or adultery, because one bill of divorcement is given because the man *hates his wife* (v. 3).

So when Christ says, **“except for fornication”** in Matthew 19, He is setting up a *new* precedent that is not in Deuteronomy 24:1-4, and all understand Him. You say, “How do you know they understand Him that way?” Look at Matthew 19:10. Having said the only reason a man can get rid of his wife is because of *fornication*, **“His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.”** Now, notice how the Jews of Christ’s day understood the Bible much better than Dr. DeHaan, C.I. Scofield, Charlie Fuller, Robert Sumner, Theodore Epp, John R. Rice, Oliver Green, or Harold Sightler. Notice how they understood *perfectly* and *exactly* what Jesus Christ is talking about. They don’t make any mistakes about it. They ask, **“Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”** Now, that is clear, if you don’t have an ulterior motive in mind or a self-righteous, Pharisaical attitude towards those who have been less fortunate in marriage than you have been. That is just as plain as the nose on your face. You had better read it right. You say, “Or *what?*” *Or else your Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, will fix your wagon, here or later.* You have no business persecuting the saints on the basis of a lie.

You say, why have you gone to this much background? Because the big stumblingblock to the “historic Fundamentalist position” is Romans 7. (We’ll see about that when we get there.) There isn’t any way a man can understand Romans 7 without understanding the *law*, because Romans 7:1 said that it was written to them *that knew the*

law. Why, my stars, people, if Paul said, **“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,)”** don’t you know that the man who reads that had sure better see what the law says so he can know what he’s talking about? Theodore Epp is absolutely wrong on these matters, and he is teaching an unsound, unbiblical heresy that comes from perverting the word of God from the context. We would expect him to do this because he and Christian Weiss have been altering the *King James* text on almost every broadcast, every week for better than twenty years. We should not be surprised that these modern apostates and Fundamentalists have fixed up a lying doctrine that lines up with the Roman Catholic Church, and it has nothing to do with sound doctrine.

Now, in Matthew 19, these *facts* are clear: (1) Marriage is a flesh-plus-flesh, physical affair, which is found in verses 5, 6, and 12. **“And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder...For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”** (2) In the Old Testament, a man could put away his wife for any cause. Matthew 19:3, **“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”** and Deuteronomy 24:1, 3, **“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house...And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house....”** That’s clear. New Testament grounds for divorce (where you can give your wife a bill of divorcement and put her away), are fornication. Matthew 19:9, **“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.”** Why did he say **“fornication”**? First Corinthians 6:16, 18, **“What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh...Flee fornication.”** Could anything be any clearer than that? If a man’s wife steps out on him and joins her body to the body of another man, *flesh* has left *flesh*, and that man can give her a bill of divorcement and “put her away” according to Jesus Christ. (I wouldn’t ask your opinion about that if you thought you were the fourth member of the Trinity. If you were both Houses of Congress or the United Nations, I wouldn’t bother to ask you for the time of day when it came to that. Why take an *opinion* when you have the revelation of God? When a man takes a man’s opinion when the revelation has spoken contrary, he is taking a *demon’s opinion* instead of *God’s opinion*.)

The Bible is an interesting book, isn’t it? All right, now back in Matthew 19:9, look at this. **“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.”** Notice the *remarriage* in the same context with the legitimate divorce. The only remarriage that is considered illegitimate is where the *grounds of divorce* are illegitimate. Where the bill of divorcement was for the right thing—fornication—the remarriage was allowed. It is in the context. As a matter of fact,

it is right in the middle of the verse.

Now, the amazing thing about the legitimate grounds for divorce is that everywhere they are mentioned, a *remarriage is mentioned in the context*. For example: in the case of widowhood, 1 Corinthians 7:39, **“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord”**—remarriage. That one was in the case of death. Now look at this one. 1 Corinthians 7:27, **“Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.”** “Art thou loosed from a wife,” notice he didn’t say *what grounds*, just **“loosed.”** (You want some “Greek,” boy, look up that one! These apostate Fundamentalists always change the *King James Bible* with the Greek trying to prove a point. Boy, honey, let’s see you find that word **“loosed”** in 1 Corinthians 7:27 in the Greek. That will make your hair stand on end.) That’s a man who has been divorced, but I wouldn’t go to the Greek to prove it. I don’t have to. Why waste your time with “the Greek” when you’ve got it in your own language? Verse 28, **“But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.”** Notice a remarriage in all three contexts. A man says, “But....” We’re not through, we’re not through. Now that we have established basics, we are ready for Romans 7.

We’ve established a basis for sound Bible doctrine. Let it first of all be said, emphatically, that it is sound doctrine for people to live holy, justly, righteously, unblameably before God. It is sound doctrine that the marriage bed is undefiled and honorable in all (Heb. 13:4). Let us establish sound doctrine in that if an unsaved person wants to stay with a saved person, then let them stay and stick together. First Corinthians 7:12-13 says, **“But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.”** Let us never forget when dealing with matters of divorce and remarriage, that we have to teach sound doctrine from the word of God and not the hallucinations of some “historic position” that teaches Roman Catholic rubbish.

A *marriage ceremony* in the Bible is not a real *marriage*. Marriage is *flesh joining flesh*, and divorce is *flesh leaving flesh*; and where flesh leaves flesh, those are spiritual grounds for divorce according to Jesus Christ. Now, watch it carefully in Romans 7:1, **“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?”** Then follows the classic case.

First of all, I’ll read it like an apostate Fundamentalist teaching a Roman Catholic “sacrament,” and then I will read it as it reads in the word of God. First of all the false reading. Are you ready?

“For the woman which had a husband she *was married to*, is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the man she was married to died, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if while the man she *was married to* liveth, she gets *divorced* and marries another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if the man she *was married to* be dead, she is free from the law so she is no adulteress though she *got a divorce* and married another man.”

You say, “No Bible reads that way.” But that is the way a Pharisee reads it. They have a *divorce* read into verse 2, but they can’t read it into verse 3. Isn’t that a strange thing? **“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”** Now, what do you suppose led these people to believe that this woman had any *divorce*, let alone a legal one? Aren’t people weird? Here’s a man who said this woman here has “three living husbands” or “two living husbands,” or this man over here has “two living wives”—according to what? Romans 7:2-3? Why, bless your heart, you never *read about a divorce in Romans 7:2-3*. You say, “Well, it says she’s married to the other fellow.” You sure walked into it blindfolded, didn’t you? You thought the *marriage* was the *ceremony*. Now, here we’ve reached the heart of the matter. The interpretation given by Theodore Epp to Matthew 19 is circulated all over this country. This foul, unholy, unscriptural doctrine is accepted by the Roman Catholic church in Romans 7 to mean that if you *were ever married*, you could never marry again as long as the person you *were married to was still around somewhere*. How do they do that?

They take this for granted by saying, “If she be married to another man, she had to get a *divorce* from her first husband.” State law requires it, doesn’t it? Otherwise she is guilty of bigamy. *Why, you never read anything about a divorce in Romans 7:1-3. Look at it.* **“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”** Where did you define a *divorce* in there? You see, that word “**loosed**” at the end of verse 2? *That’s a divorce.* But that is if the man is *dead*. You never read in verse 3, “so while her *former* husband lives, she got a *divorce* and got married again, she is an adulteress.” You read, “while the man she is married to is *alive* and they’re still *married*, then if she gets another fellow, she is an adulteress.” That is what you read. You just didn’t *believe* what you *read*. Let’s get the correct reading. **“For the woman which hath an husband [present tense, married to him now] is bound by the law to her husband [the man that’s true to her, to whom she is married] so long as he liveth; but if the husband [the man she is married to legally and righteously] be dead, she is loosed [divorced] from the law of her husband [she can get remarried]. So then if, while her husband [not the fellow “she was divorced from,” it is her husband—the man she is married to legally and righteously] liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress....”** She is guilty of what?? Adultery; and that is why she is called an “**adulteress**,” because she *is*. Now, do you see that thing right there? Go back now and look at Leviticus 20. I mean, he wrote to them **“that know the law.”** Leviticus 20:10, **“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife [not a divorced woman legally divorced and “put away”—it is another man’s wife), even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”** Now, how much plainer can you get it? Unless you have an

ulterior motive in mind in setting yourself up as “holier than thou,” and putting some Christians into a body of “second class citizens” beneath you, as something inferior to you because they have had sex problems you haven’t had.

I’ll tell you, brethren, some of the biggest fundamental leaders in this country are the biggest self-righteous sinners that ever lied about the Bible. And don’t you think some unsaved folks can’t spot it. Some Christians may have a hard time spotting it, but believe me, some of the unsaved people are not so easily fooled.

Now, you take this business right there—this thing in Romans 7. *That woman isn’t divorced.* That man isn’t divorced. That man is true to his wife. He hasn’t stepped out on her; *she has stepped out on him*, and in doing that, she has committed two things: (1) the act of fornication—which gives her husband a legal right to give her a bill of divorcement; (2) she’s committed adultery, in stepping out on him. *She’s an adulteress.* For the time being (until her husband gives the bill of divorcement and puts her away), in the eyes of God, she has *two men at the same time.*

Christ says to that woman in John 4, **“For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband...”** Now, this shows you the difference between speaking about it *practically*, and speaking about it *legally*. You see, practically (openly), the woman has *two husbands*. She’s shacking up with *both* of them. In the eyes of the law she would be guilty of bigamy, if she had papers to go with *one* of them, she is an adulteress—stepping out on her husband. In the eyes of God, she has swapped husbands, and her husband, bless your heart, is single—*he is “loosed.”* And if he is “loosed,” there is a remarriage that I just read you in 1 Corinthians 7:27-28.

All right, now let’s look at 1 Corinthians 7. (We have found here two legal, scriptural grounds for divorce. These grounds of divorce are given by God in the holy scriptures, and sound doctrine must allow for their teaching. You see, these dumb Fundamentalists—you have to keep repeating yourself because they’re harebrained, they’re scatterbrained—they have a persecution complex. They’re sensitive; they’re touchy; they’re emotionally upset; they’re disturbed. Once you start pulling out this hard, fast, straight *King James* truth, they get as rattled as a woman looking for a new pair of shoes. They start saying, “Ruckman’s doing this, and Ruckman’s doing that, and...” Shut your mouth until you know better. We’re dealing here with sound doctrine; and if you’re not apostate, you better search the scriptures and see “if these things be so,” and you had better believe what you read, and you had better teach it. *You had better preach it, and you had better practice it.* If you’re not going to, go on and be a fool—it’s your neck and not mine.)

In 1 Corinthians 7, we have another ground for divorce: *death*, which looses the other party and makes him (or her) single and available for remarriage. Verse 39, **“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”** Then we also find *desertion*, which looses one party and makes them single and available for remarriage. Verse 15, **“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.”** Do you understand that? A man said, “Well, I thought that death was the only grounds.” You got that from the Roman Catholic Church.

I was talking with one of the brethren one time—quite naturally he had been taught what he was trying to give me by some teacher at Tennessee Temple. This teacher at Tennessee Temple (he was a typical apostate) corrected the *King James Bible* about three times a class—typical. He said this, “I believe a bishop is only to have ‘one wife.’ A man can’t be a pastor unless he has one wife, and if he has any former wife living anywhere, he has got more than one wife.”

I said, “Do you really believe that?”

He said, “Yes, I do.”

I said, “In plainer words, you would interpret 1 Timothy 3:2 as the bishop must *only be married once*, right?”

He said, “Right.”

I said, “You don’t believe that.”

He said, “Sure I do.”

I said, “I’m going to pin you down. Are you trying to say that being the *husband of one wife* means that a man, to be a minister, should only have gone through one *marriage ceremony* with a wedding ring? Is that what you’re saying?”

He said, “Yes, except in the case of death.”

I said, “Hold the phone a minute, man. If the fellow remarried after death, it would be *two marriages* and two rings and two certificates; you said *one*.”

Do you see the mess people get into? That fellow had four years of Christian education, and he actually thought he had a brain in his head. Aren’t people strange?

After that man had just said all that, I called to his attention that Bob Jones Sr. had been married twice. He liked to have flipped. If the verse meant “only married once,” it didn’t say only married *twice*. If it said only married *once*, it didn’t say *any exceptions*. You got the exception from Romans 7, and Romans 7 *wasn’t talking about that!* Romans 7 was talking about a woman stepping out on her husband, *while he was alive*. Boy, if people aren’t weird! If they don’t get themselves in a mess messing with that *King James* text!

Why, 1 Timothy 3:1-2 says, **“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, *the husband of one wife*, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.”** First Timothy 3:1 can’t mean “only married once.” That would disqualify a thousand ministers from the ministry. It has to mean he is *faithful to the one wife he’s got*. If he’s scripturally and legally divorced and remarried, he *has only one wife*. If he’s true to her, that is the only wife he’s got. Any other interpretation of that passage is immoral and is trying to give a man an alibi for sin; because if it means “only married once,” it means the bishop, as long as he doesn’t get *divorce papers* from his wife or vice versa, *can have as many women to shack up with as he wants to*. That is the Pharisaical, Roman Catholic interpretation of Romans 7 and 1 Timothy 3, and it is to allow a leeway for immorality, as long as the “sacrament” is left inviolate. You see? *Anything goes, as long as the church ceremony is preserved as the great thing.*

First Corinthians 7:8-10 says, **“I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.”** That is a *commandment*. The wife is told not to depart from her husband. That is the directive will of God. Verse 11, **“But [this is the permissive will of God—second choice] and if she depart, let her remain unmarried [not join her body up to the body of another man] or [if she is going to join her body up to a man] be reconciled to her husband [her body come back and join his body].”** Now, is that clear? Do you see why we spent this time in background work in Matthew 19 and Deuteronomy 24? Why, you had to! If you didn’t, these monkeys would get to 1 Corinthians 7:11 and say that it means as long as the woman doesn’t go through another *marriage ceremony* and another *ring*, that the guy is bound to her forever after she leaves.

You see how the old Pharisee thinks? He always has in mind the *ceremonial observance of a legal ritual*. The last part of verse 11 says, **“...and let not the husband put away his wife.”** That’s why I don’t recommend divorce. I recommend you stay with your husband, verse 10. I recommend you don’t leave your wife, verse 12; and that you don’t “put her away,” verse 11.

But what happens if they leave you for good? Verse 15, **“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother [a saved man] or a sister [a saved woman] is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.”** Where the other party departs and deserts the believing party, the believing party is not *bound* to the party that leaves. You say, “Well, what about a case where a Christian person departs from a brother or sister?” You’re not given that specific thing in the word of God, because it is taken for granted that they won’t. That is fraud (see v. 5), for it is without “consent.” So when you get to 1 Corinthians 7:15, you’ve got a case that can apply either way. The important thing is that the one who is left single is a brother, a believing man, or a sister, a saved woman. They are not under bondage; they are not bound to the party that departed.

Now, one can see throughout all this study how much legal Pharisaism has crept into interpretation of the Bible by the apostate Fundamentalists who follow the Roman Catholic position.

For example: I was in California one time, right after my wife had deserted me, sitting at a table with a bunch of pastors and their wives. There fell a hush over the dinner table, and I knew a bomb was about to drop. A young preacher sitting right across from me suddenly said to me, “Do you think a man who is divorced should be a minister and go on in the ministry?”

I prayed real quick and asked the Lord to give me a “nugget,” and I said, “What did you say?” (Of course, while they take time to ask you again, the Lord has time to give you something.)

He said, “Do you think a man that’s been divorced should be a minister?”

I said, “Well, I’ll put it this way. Suppose you and your wife don’t get along (she was sitting right there beside him at the table when I said that, and she turned beet red, and his eyes shifted), and just suppose someday your wife decides she’s tired of the ministry, and

she's tired of you, and she just quits and leaves. Now, have you been called to preach?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Has your wife been called to preach?"

He said, "No."

I said, "Well, are you going to quit then just because she quits?"

He said, "Well, I hadn't thought about it that way."

I said, "Well, *think about it*; please pass the salt."

There are a lot of wild things going on. Do you know what these Pharisees would have you think? (Now let me just show you the implication. Let me talk real plain for a while.) Do you men realize that if your wife left you, and then she didn't have another marriage ceremony (she just ran around with various men through a period of eight or nine years, but nobody wanted her anyway after she left, you know those things happen), do you realize that according to eighty percent of the Fundamental leaders in the Body of Christ, that you, as a man, would be condemned to be a *perpetual eunuch with no sex life for the rest of your life*? Now, you need to think about that. I mean really think about that. Do you realize that if you were twenty-two years old, and your wife left you and never got another marriage ceremony performed (like we had happen here with a fellow), that as far as eighty percent of the leaders are concerned, beginning at twenty-two, your sex life would be over until you were dead? Now, you talk about binding "**heavy burdens and grievous to be borne**" upon men (Matt. 23:4), what do you think about that?

Let's eliminate some things: (1) You couldn't run around with single women, because in their eyes that would be *fornication*. (2) You couldn't fool around with married women, because in their eyes that would be *adultery*. (3) You couldn't go around and just get a professional hustler, that would be *whoremongering* (Heb. 13:4). (4) You couldn't practice self-satisfaction with self-abuse; that would be *lasciviousness* or unclean practices defiling body and spirit. What could you do? According to Theodore Epp, for example, or Sightler, or a dozen other leaders in Fundamentalism? I'll tell you what you could do. *You could play tiddlywinks and play marbles.*

Now, that's the kind of a mess an apostate gets into when he sets himself up as a judge of the word of God, or as a judge of the brethren.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:27, "**Art thou bound unto a wife?**" Okay, answer: "**seek not to be loosed.**" That's clear. Here is a man telling you, "Well, you've got 'two living husbands,' so you ought to divorce your second husband and go back to your first one." You should? Don't you know that the law forbade that? I mean, "**I speak to them that know the law,**" Romans 7:1-2. Do you know what the law said about your first husband? Deuteronomy 24:2-4: "**And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.**" Now, isn't that something? Why, in

Deuteronomy 24:1-4, that *second marriage* after a divorce is so *scriptural* and so *complete* and so *thorough* that in that case, if the second husband dies, *the woman can't go back*. Isn't that something? Paul says, "**I speak to them that know the law,**" talking to Gentile Christians *in Rome in the Body of Christ in the church age*.

Folks say, "Ruckman, how long did it take to find all this out?" Well, I wrote the *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew* in 1959. It wasn't published until 1970. I've got on tapes what I taught about marriage and divorce from 1960 to 1980. I've always taught *three grounds* for divorce. That is, there are three things that loose a body from another body and cause that person to be single. (1) *Fornication*, with a remarriage in the context. (2) *Desertion*, with a remarriage in the context. (3) *Death*, with a remarriage in the context.

I'm told in 1 Corinthians 7:27 that if I'm loosed from a wife, I am "not to seek a wife," but if I remarry, "I have not sinned" (see 1 Cor. 7:28). Now, do you know what these self-righteous hypocrites do when they get to 1 Corinthians 7:28? (I mean, the manipulations of the mind in trying to avoid the truth are fantastic. If you wonder why I go into such detailed matters, and why I'm so negative and critical in my examinations, it's because I have to follow the maneuvers of the truth-jumping mind that seeks to dodge the truth. When a fellow gets hung up on these things because of personal prejudice or personal pride, his mind becomes unhinged and goes off like a rocket without a stabilizer.) You know what these fellows do with this passage? They try to tell you that the marrying in verse 28 is getting married the first time, and the first half of the verse refers to a *male* getting married, while the second half of the verse refers to a *female* getting married; and this is proved by the fact that it says that if a *virgin* marry, *she* hath not sinned.

Tell me something. If the first half of the verse is not a reference to verse 27 (a remarriage with a statement on a first marriage), to a person who has never been married, why would Paul say if a *man marries*, he hasn't sinned? What would be the point of saying that, if it was a *first marriage*? Is there anybody in God's universe who would think that the first marriage was a *sin*? Christ recommended it, and Paul said it was "honorable in all," and Paul just told them it was all right in 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9. Haven't we got us some winners?

Now, this shows you the length that a "Bible believing" Fundamentalist will go to, to get around the truth. If what you read here is true (if a man is loosed from a wife for any of the reasons given before), if that man is loosed and single, then that man has a right to remarry if verse 28 goes with verse 27. "**Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.**" Notice, "**seek not a wife. But**"—look at that disjunctive conjunction—two of them. "**Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry,**"— why, it's a reference to a man who has been *loosed from a wife*. "Horrors," says the Pharisee, "How can we avoid *that*?" That rascal hits upon the capital idea in verse 28 that the vow of verse 28 *is not a reference to anybody in verse 27*, but is a reference to the first marriage of a man, and to the first marriage of a woman. This would mean that Paul (in the middle of a discourse on being *loosed from wives* and getting married) suddenly says, "If a man marries, he hasn't sinned." Why, you cockeyed nut,

there isn't anybody who ever lived who didn't know it was all right to get married, if they'd never been married before. Who didn't know *that*? The man who needed to be told that it was all right to marry (because a lot of people would be convinced it would be a sin to get married, if he did get married) would obviously be the man who had been loosed from a wife—verse 27.

And there stands the Biblical picture of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It's clear in the *AV 1611*. Only by approaching that Bible with the Pharisaical attitude of a sacramental bigot, with the emphasis laid on the legal ritual of the ceremony, can a man arrive at the interpretation being taught by eighty percent of the Fundamentalists in America today. It's taught to produce a "first class Christian" and a "second class Christian" who is a little bit lower down the scale spiritually than the high and mighty folks who weren't *caught in the act*, or were fortunate enough never to have committed the act.

I go up and down this country, and I find a common problem. Do you know what it is? It's the problem of what to do with the *spiritual people* in your church who have been married more than once and yet are more spiritual than the people who have only been married *once*. Do you know that constitutes a real problem? Here's a couple who have had the misfortune to have been through a divorce, which is a bad thing and a tragic thing. (I don't recommend it.) They're remarried, and they're happily established in a Christian home. They love the Lord, and they're willing to atone for their sins. They've made it up to God and each other, and they win souls, love God, love the church, and they're faithful in attendance. They believe the Book, and they are equipped to teach. What do you do with them? Why, it's simple. You say they have "two living wives" or husbands, and you put them on a back seat (like Theodore Epp). Then you let the couple that has only been *married once* for thirty years (and gripe about everything and want to run the church and lie about the attendance and mishandle the funds behind your back) have the class or put them in as a trustee, right? You know what I mean, jellybean? That's the problem we have.

Now, I'll sum it up. I teach (have always taught, and will always teach, until the Lord shows me otherwise) there are *three* grounds for divorce: death, desertion, and fornication. In all three cases—death, desertion, and fornication—the party who is left alone is single, and as a *single person*, they are capable of remarriage.

The remarriage is warned against because of *trouble in the flesh*. The remarriage is advised against, and they are told they would be happier if they would stay *single*. They are told that if they get remarried, they will *not have sinned*, but they will have "trouble in the flesh." They are given the added caution that they *can marry only a person in the Lord*—a Christian person.

That's my teaching. That was my teaching in 1955, '56, '57, and '58. I taught that in 1959, '60, '61, and '62, and I taught that in '63, '64, '65, '66, and '67, and I taught that in '68, '69, '70, '71, '72, '73, and '74; that's what I taught in '75, '76, and '77, and that's what I'm teaching now (1995).

Several years back, the Indiana Fellowship of youth directors and camp directors got together to invite me to their camp, where I had been going for a number of years, and they took a vote on me. (I had pastored one church as a single man for twelve years; you

don't hear them talk about that. I not only pastored, I raised my children by myself. You don't hear them talk about *that*. Maybe God will give them that opportunity someday. Some of these, you know, strong, spiritual fellows— too bad they missed that blessing!) Anyway, these preachers got together and said, "Since Brother Ruckman has remarried, how do you feel about having him back?" They took a vote, and in that vote something like seventy percent said, "Don't bring him back," and thirty percent said, "Bring him back." When it was all over, the man in charge of the youth camp that year said, "I'm going to honor and respect the majority; we'll not have Brother Ruckman back." He said, "However, I want to have you fellows know that I think some of you are a bunch of hypocrites. Some of you have fellows swap around in your pulpits and trade pulpits with preachers who are in the same situation, and I never heard you open your mouths about it." Then he got righteously indignant, and he said to these pastors, "The worst thing is this. The worst thing is you had Brother Ruckman's book (Matthew), that told you what he believed about marriage, divorce, separation, and remarriage, and you read it, and you had him come in and preach to our kids two years before he got remarried, *knowing what he taught and believed and preached*. He hasn't changed, you fellows have."

I believe that's about all that needs to be said about it, and that's all I'm going to say about it. There's no need to get personal.

After all, the Bible is clear, and you fellows who teach otherwise are *wrong*, and you are *dead wrong*, and you will never be right until you repent and straighten out. In the meantime (at least in that department of Christian theology), you'll be living like the Devil. If you can live with your own conscience on it, do it. I'm not going to worry about it; the Lord has been too good to me to pick a fight. I'm enjoying my ministry that God has given me, and I'm enjoying it more today than I ever have before in my life. By the grace of God, I'll continue to do so. If you have taught otherwise about these matters than what you read here (scripture with scripture), you're not teaching the truth, and that isn't because I teach it; it's because the Book says it. You've heard what the Book says, in the context in which it says it, without *distortion* and without *perversion*. *You know it, and I know it*, and if there is a doubt in your mind, go back and read it again, carefully and slowly.

Truth, boys and girls, can stand on its own two feet without a prop. The One who wrote the Book and preserved it will do the rest of the exposition.

AMEN, AMEN, AND AMEN.

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