

33 Reasons Why Divorce & Remarriage Is Wrong

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

#1

Because from the beginning it was not so (Matt. 19:4, 8). God has not changed His design for marriage. Man has changed it. Jesus commanded that divorce be stopped on the basis of the Genesis pattern (Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:9) and what He says (“I say unto you” – Matt. 5:32; 19:9). “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female (Matt.19:4).” We need to reread the marriage contract that Jesus talked about. Marriage is for life.

#2

Because the word “cleave” (being glued or fastened together) suggests a permanent marriage bond (Gen. 2:24). “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). There is no allowance made in Genesis 2:24 for divorce.

#3

Because God created only one wife for Adam using only one of his ribs. If God had wanted Adam to have a succession of wives, He would have taken two or three ribs from Adam and created not only Eve, but Ellen, Sandra, and Joan. “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Genesis 2:21-22).

#4

Because in marriage two people become “one flesh” in God’s sight in a mystical spiritual unity (Gen. 2:24). God purposed to indissolubly unite two people into one person. This indicates God’s intended purpose for marriage. It was to be a permanent unity established by God where two become spiritually unified for life. Marriage establishes kinship relationships with a new family. We

can no more break a one-flesh marriage relationship than we can blood-family relationships. A child partakes of the flesh of both the father and the mother, and the two are absolutely inseparable!

#5

Because divorce is an attempt to separate what God has purposed to join together for life. “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mark 10:9). God is very clear on the permanency of marriage. Whenever we try to undo what God has deemed undoable we violate His perfect design, plan, and purpose for marriage.

#6

Because marriage is to reflect the permanent relationship between Christ and the church. “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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:31-32). Christ will never be divorced or separated from the believer (Rom. 8:35-39; John 10:28). Christ’s relationship with His Church is permanent and binding. In the same way, the marriage union between a man and woman is a picture of a permanent relationship.

#7

Because God unequivocally states that He hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). It is Malachi’s intention to encourage husbands to remain faithful and true to their first wife. “For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he **hateth putting away**: for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously” (Malachi 2:16).

#8

Because God calls divorce a treachery in His sight (Malachi 2:14-16). “Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt **treacherously**: yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal **treacherously** against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God

of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for *one* covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not **treacherously**" (Mal. 2:14-16).

#9

Because remarriage and adultery is an abomination in God's sight (Deut. 24:4 Jer. 3:1). "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" (Deut. 24:4). "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be **greatly polluted**? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 3:1). Divorce was viewed in a negative light even though Moses permitted it. It was never condoned or promoted by God.

#10

Because God looks at divorce and remarriage to a divorced person as something which is unholy and forbidden. "They shall not take a wife *that is* a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for **he is holy unto his God**. Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the Lord, which sanctify you, *am* holy" (Lev. 21:7-8).

#11

Because under the Mosaic Law divorce was regulated – not sanctioned by God (Deut. 24:1-4). It was legislated – not licensed. Divorce was simply permitted and regulated by God because of the hardness of people's hearts (Matt. 19:8). They were going to do it anyway. There are other things that were permitted (not sanctioned) by God and regulated in a fallen world of sin such as slavery, war, and even polygamy. "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" (Matt. 19:8).

#12

Because Jesus said a person commits adultery when he divorces and remarries and also causes others to commit adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). This is reason enough not to divorce and remarry. “But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery (by her remarriage): and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced (another divorced woman) committeth adultery (with her - causing her to also commit adultery as well)” - Matt. 5:32. You can't get around it. The summary of Jesus can't be overturned or overruled by the alleged Pauline loopholes and marital grounds for remarriage. In essence, Jesus is saying: Whether you file for a divorce and remarry, or whether you marry another divorced person, adultery takes place in the act of remarriage. Divorce is wrong because it attempts to separate what God has joined together (Mark 10:9). However, remarriage, which normally occurs after divorce, compounds the sin. This is because adultery takes place in the act of remarriage. Since God does not recognize divorce the next marriage of a divorced person would involve committing the sin of adultery with someone other than his original spouse.

There are several scenarios to consider. **1)** The man remarrying (“shall marry another” – Matt. 19:9) would commit adultery no matter who he remarries since the original marriage bond is permanent in God's eyes. **2)** In marrying another divorced woman (“marry her that is divorced”) he would also commit adultery with her, even though he was not responsible for legally dissolving her marriage. At the same time, he would cause her to commit adultery with him, since she was previously divorced. Any remarriage after divorce causes one or both partners to commit adultery depending on their previous marital status. **3)** The man's remarriage would also become an act of adultery against the rejected or divorced spouse and a sin before the holy eyes of God (Hab. 1:13). Both the wife and God Himself would be violated because of a promised covenant that was broken. **4)** In addition, the sin of remarriage and adultery would cause the rejected spouse to sin (“causeth her to commit adultery”) in that she would probably end up remarrying and committing adultery herself. One of the old, worldly soap operas was called, “These are the days of

our lives!” Actually, they should not be the days of our lives if we want to be God-fearing, Bible believing, and God-honoring in our marriage relationship.

#13

Because the exception clause does not give grounds for divorce and remarriage (Matt. 5:32; 19:8). The term “fornication” in the Jewish context of Matthew is used in a specialized sense (1 Cor. 5:1; Acts 15:29) and refers to incest or committing sexual immorality with near kin or relatives (Leviticus 18:6-18; 20:21). It was not the normal word for “adultery” (moicheuo); therefore, it’s improper to read adultery into the exception clause. The Jewish context of Matthew’s gospel account would also exclude adultery. James Montgomery Boice remarked: “It cannot refer to adultery because adultery was punishable by death, and in that case there would be no need for a divorce.”

Near kin marriages was a hot issue in Jesus’ day. Therefore, the Pharisees were obviously trying to put Jesus to the test and see if He would defend the Old Testament Scriptures about near kin marriages (fornication - porneia) and use these Scriptures to speak out against Herod’s illegal incestuous marriage with his niece, the former wife of his brother Philip (Matt. 14:3-4).

Herod Antipas had two brothers named Philip. The one Matthew referred to here was Herod Philip I. Philip was Herod Antipas’ half-brother. Therefore, Antipas’ marriage to Philip’s wife Herodias was incestuous based upon the near kin Mosaic moral law (Lev. 18:16; 20:21), which refers to prohibited marriages based upon the Mosaic Law of near kin marriages. People were not to marry within the family relationships. John the Baptist lost his head over this issue one or two years prior to this meeting with the Pharisees (Matt. 14:1-8). Maybe the same fate would happen to Jesus. This was the plot of the Pharisees.

Jesus simply avoided a confrontation with Herod and revealed that these near kin marriages were not legitimate in God’s eyes (like homosexual marriages today) and could be legally dissolved by divorce. The exception clause is not an exception to dissolve or end a *true* marriage but a legal divorce exception given in the case

of a non-recognized marriage relationship, which was forbidden under Jewish Law. Jesus was simply saying that there could be no divorce and remarriage except in the case of these illegal and illegitimate marriages.

Let's state it in simple fashion. *God puts all marriages together (Matt. 19:6) except when two people commit incest (marriage among near kin or relatives)*. In this case an exception can be made where the two sever their marriage from a legal standpoint and no longer live together in incest.

#14

Because the intended Roman readers of Mark's Gospel (Mark 10:11-12) and the Greek-Gentile readers of Luke's Gospel (Luke 16:18) would not have known of this exception clause that was recorded only in Matthew's Gospel for Jewish readers. Therefore, Jesus makes a clear affirmation of the permanency of marriage in all the Gospel records. Matthew's record does not overturn Mark's and Luke's record on divorce. The pressing crime of many evangelicals today is that they miss the main teaching of Jesus, even in Matthew's record to the Jews, which is the permanency of the marriage relationship (no divorce).

Surely Jesus would not undo this binding covenant of marriage with an exception clause in Matthew's Gospel record, which no others would read, and invalidate His clear claims recorded by Mark and Luke. Twenty-first century Christian readers can see all three Synoptic Gospels and harmonize the passages, but in this day and even in the early days of the church, the people did not have this privilege or benefit. Therefore, Jesus made the same clear and unmistakable affirmations in all three Gospel records. No divorce! Period. This unifying purpose can be seen in all the Gospel records, even Matthew's account. Jesus was unified and consistent in His teaching concerning divorce and remarriage.

#15

Because we must interpret the exception clause in light of the clear revelation of truth. Matthew 19:6, "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Whatever the exception is in

verse nine it would not overturn the clear affirmation that Jesus had just made in verse six concerning the permanency of marriage. Jesus would not argue for permanency in marriage and then immediately contradict His clear command to stop severing marriage unions, which God has permanently bound together. No passage, when correctly interpreted, will teach something contradictory to the rest of Scripture. We must remember the important interpretive principle of always examining the clear teachings of Scripture in light of the less clear. This will keep us from error and divergent views that Jesus or the Bible never intended to convey to its readers.

#16

Because the New Testament epistles clearly set forth the permanency of marriage until the death of a spouse (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39). Divorce is never viewed as an option. “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” (1 Cor. 7:39). This is a clear, unmistakable, and non-contradictory truth. Any verse that seems to contradict what Paul said should be interpreted in a way that would never diminish the clear meanings and affirmations of Scripture on the permanency of marriage.

Romans 7:2-3 says, “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 that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” In these verses, Paul is using the Biblical teaching on the permanency of marriage as an illustration of the law’s jurisdiction over a person’s life. Marriage is a lifelong commitment. Marriage is a permanent institution that cannot be severed until a death occurs. In a similar way, the believer has died to the law’s mastery and is freed from the law’s jurisdiction and condemnation and has now been remarried to Christ (Rom. 7:4 – “dead to the law” and “married to another”).

#17

Because in 1 Corinthians 7:10-13 Paul declares four times that there should be no divorce and departure from the marriage relationship. “And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, **Let not** the wife depart from *her* husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and **let not** the husband put away *his* wife. 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” (1 Cor. 7:10-13).

#18

Because God always wants reconciliation instead of divorce and remarriage (1 Cor. 7:16) “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife? (1 Cor. 7:16). The practice of reconciliation should be the attitude of the believing Christian and part of the praying process when marriages are in jeopardy and when they have crumbled. God can make a way! “Is any thing to hard for the LORD?” (Gen. 18:14).

#19

Because a saved family member can make a difference in an unsaved marriage relationship (1 Cor. 7:14). “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (1 Cor. 7:14). It may be that an unbeliever will be led to the Lord by the believer in the marriage relationship (1 Pet. 3:1). The believer can also have a spiritual impact on the children and entire family as they live for the Lord and manifests the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. They can be the spiritual compass in the marriage relationship and maintain hope for the salvation and sanctification of the family unit.

#20

Because a pastor and deacon must be the “husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6). This demonstrates God’s disapproval of the practice of divorce and conveys His desire to maintain a high

and holy standard for church leaders and officers (elders and deacons).

#21

God does not break covenants (Lev. 26:40-45) and since divorce breaks the marriage covenant made before God (Mal. 2:14), it does not meet with God's approval! God sees marriage as a covenant, which has been made before Him, and a covenant that should never be broken (Prov. 21:17). God has an unbreakable attitude toward covenants. "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I *am* the Lord their God (Lev. 26:44).

#22

Because the divorce permitted in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah was a unique situation that took place in the restoration community under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah to insure the continued existence of the nation (Deut. 7:3-4), their faith, and preserve the line through which the Messiah would come. This was a *special protective action* that would ensure the purity of the nation's bloodline and the entrance of the Messiah or Savior into the world. The destruction of a recently restored nation by heathen marriages with idolatrous Gentiles would threaten the whole program of salvation (John 3:16).

It must be remembered that divorce is not being condoned or promoted as God's choice for any marriage but once again regulated in light of unusual circumstances. To use this account as grounds for divorce today is to bypass the clear commands of Scripture on this subject (1 Cor. 7:39) and misapply abnormal and unusual regulations for divorce in Nehemiah's day to today's society. Bible history reveals that God would sometimes take drastic measures to preserve His people and the coming seed (Christ).

#23

Because the priests were not to marry a divorced person (Lev. 21:7,14). They were to live a holy life in every area including marriage. "They shall not take a wife *that is* a whore, or profane;

neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he *is* holy unto his God” (Lev. 21:7). “A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, *or* an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife” (Lev. 21:14). This shows God’s disapproval of divorce and remarriage.

#24

Because God’s divorce of Israel (Jer. 3:8) cannot be construed as His sanction or approval of divorce. Divorce is God’s expression of His anger toward Israel. Israel is personified as an adulterous woman (Jer. 3:1, 3-10; 4:30). Hosea says this apostasy has severed Israel’s relationship with God (Hos. 2:2). One must understand that divorce imagery is used to describe how His relationship with His people has been corrupted by spiritual apostasy – her spiritual adultery. God put her away into captivity.

In these verses, divorce is being used in a metaphorical sense to describe God’s relationship to Israel. It is not being used to teach God’s sanction and legal grounds for divorce in true marriage. *We must distinguish between historical and teaching passages of the Bible.* The fact is this. God will never sever His relationship with Israel (Gen. 12:2-3; 15:7-21; 17:7). God has unconditionally and unilaterally bound himself to Israel. However, a metaphorical illustration of divorce is appropriate to describe His displeasure toward His people. It becomes an exegetical fallacy to build a theology for divorce on metaphorical illustrations.

#25

Because Jesus never gave His approval of the five relationships and marriages that the Samaritan woman had with other men (John 4:17-18). “For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly” (John 4:18). The conversation of Jesus with this woman was designed to point to her past and present sins in order to bring her to faith in the Messiah and Savior (John 4:22 – “salvation is of the Jews”).

#26

Because Jesus told an adulterous woman to go and sin no more (John 8:1-11). This proves that Jesus did not allow for divorce and remarriage, which constituted adultery in God’s sight (Luke 16:18).

Jesus always spoke against the sin of adultery. “She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).

#27

Because the epistles repeatedly condemn adultery, which would be committed not only in a marriage relationship, but also in the act of remarriage. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness (Gal. 5:19).

#28

Because one of the Ten Commandments says that we should never commit adultery. “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” (Lev. 20:10; see also Deut. 5:18; Rom. 13:9). God's moral laws never change!

#29

Because the disciples' response to what Jesus said about marriage and the exception clause argues for permanency in the marriage relationship without any option for divorce. Matthew 19:10, “His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.” In other words, the disciples recognized that if marriage was permanent in God's sight and could not be annulled, as Jesus was teaching, then it might just be better not to marry at all. Jesus corrected their thinking (vv. 11-12). The point is this. Had Jesus permitted divorce for adultery or other illicit sexual behavior in a true marriage relationship, then His teaching would not have risen above the teaching of the rabbi Shammai or Pharisees and provoked such a response from His disciples. This would be contrary to the usual pattern that Jesus established in His earthly teachings to the Jews (Matt. 5:21-48 - “But I say unto you”). Christ's teachings were always elevated above the present day teachings of the Jews.

#30

Because God is just in establishing the law of permanency in relationship to marriage (Gen. 18:25; Psalm 115:3; Isa. 14:27; Rev. 15:3). The outcries of the innocent parties which say, "But that's not fair," or more specifically, "God would not be fair if He established a rule like this," or "You can't expect somebody to suffer for another person's sin" point their finger directly at God. People have always questioned God's moral codes and ways. This is why the Scripture says to those who object God's ways, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9:20).

God created the marriage manual (Gen. 2:24) and He can set down the rules and limitations according to His perfect sovereignty, plan, and purpose. Isaiah 14:27, "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). The Bible says, "just and true are thy ways" (Rev. 15:3) and concludes that "he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him" (Ecc. 8:3). Stop putting blame on God for making moral codes and rules that you don't like! "But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." (Psalm 115:3).

#31

Because we should be obedient to what God tells us to do and receive the greatest blessing (Gen. 2:24). "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25). "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19). If you want God's best for your life then be willing to obey what God says concerning divorce and remarriage.

#32

Because divorce results in wounds, dishonour, and reproach. "*But* whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he *that* doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour

shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away” (Proverbs 6:32-33). There are scars related to the divorce.

#33

Because the way of the transgressor is still hard. “Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors *is* hard” (Proverbs 13:15).

For all these reasons, divorce is wrong. Wedlock is still padlock!