

Marriage Divorce and Re-marriage Questions
Questions by Emmanuel Antwi/ answers by Charli Yana

1. What does it really mean that "the man causes his innocent wife to become adulteress if the woman has not committed marital unfaithfulness but she is divorced for another wife" (Matthew 5:32).

First off, the passage mentioned doesn't include the distinction of "innocent" as it pertains to the wife. If not for the cause of fornication, both parties would be guilty if they remarried since adultery is the only exception Jesus gave for divorce in the first place (*Mat 5:32*). The husband may have 'caused' something (*by instituting an unscriptural divorce*) but the wife, in effect, would have been a party to it and thus guilty if she granted it. In that case neither one is innocent. The party that initiates the adulterous affair is guilty, giving the spouse the exception necessary to divorce.

But what if they divorced without one spouse having committed adultery and later one of them then re-marries? Is the other then free to re-marry also? In God's eyes they were still married even with a state writ of divorcement. Remember, only when state law agrees with God's law concerning marriage will God honor it. According to the restriction in *Mat 5:32* since neither was innocent in the first place, the persons either of them would marry would be guilty of adultery just as if they were the ones to have committed it with them in the first place.

"They, therefore, whoever they may be, who are divorced for any cause except the single one of adultery, if they marry again, are, according to the Scriptures, living in adultery."- Albert Barnes

2. Why is it that any woman so divorced, as in (1) above, cannot remarry even though her husband has left her for another woman; and any man who marries such a divorced woman commits adultery (Matthew 5:32; Luke 16:18)

If she didn't agree with the unscriptural divorce in the first place but by the law of the land he obtained one anyway, as long he hasn't committed adultery by marrying another woman and she remains in her 'innocent' state she is not an adulteress. (*Notice how Luke 16:18 states that the divorce came **before** the adultery.*) She (*actually both*) would then have to remain as a eunuch would for the kingdom's sake (*Mat 19:12*) unless they reconcile. Meanwhile if he marries he needs to put away his illegitimate wife and be reconciled to his former wife. In the meantime if she re-marries, since she has been given a 'legal' writ of divorcement, she becomes as guilty, under 'scriptural' law (*Mat 5:32*), as her now former husband since the divorce was not scriptural to begin with.

Scripturally, she would be the one to initiate the divorce (*Mk 10:12*) if he committed fornication against her while they were married. Marriage is a contract between three parties: the man, the woman and God. God will not initiate the divorce therefore both the man and the woman must honor that contract until it is annulled by death (*1 Cor 7:39*).

The question then is asked; "What constitutes the finality of a divorce in God's eyes?" Jesus mentioned a "writing of divorcement" (*Mat 5:31*) indicating there must have been a legal contract necessary to make the divorce final (*Deu 24:1*). God honors man's laws as long as they agree with His (*Rom 13:1-2*). Until that decree has been recognized by a court of law, in whatever country/time the divorce takes place, that marriage is still viable in the eyes of the state and thus in God's eyes. If, before she receives that writ of divorce, even though she is the

innocent party and she is intimate with another man then she has committed an immoral act because she is still bound by the marriage contract to the third party (*God*) until it becomes annulled in His eyes along with it having been granted by the law of the state.

3. What does it mean that "woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives" but not vice versa? (I Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2 refer to Jesus remarks in John 4:16-18).

1 Cor 7:39 is speaking from the perspective of what the inspired writer (*Paul*) saw as the norm of that time. Men didn't rely on women to sustain themselves since it would have been men, mostly, who were the main providers and who went out into the workforce. Women were to be mothers and homemakers and if they became widows at a young age it would have been to their advantage to re-marry (*Ruth 1- but "only in the Lord"**). Being bound to her husband through marriage, in my judgment, meant she was dependent on him for her very survival as long as he lived. Even though the husband was bound by the marital contract his survival wasn't contingent on his wife's survival.

*Paul stating that widows were to marry "only in the Lord" means either her prospective husband was to be a fellow Christian (*which would be best according to 2 Cor 6:14*) or an otherwise scripturally qualified candidate for marriage. If they didn't remarry because of age then it was up to the church to take care of their necessities (*1 Tim 5:9-12*).

In Rom 7:2 Paul intentionally used husband and wife genders to show the relationship between God being Husband to Israel (*Isa 54:5*), and Christ being Husband to His church (*2 Cor 11:2*).

It could be that the woman at the well (*Joh 4:16-18*) was widowed five times (*see Mat 22:23-28*). More than likely, being a Samaritan, she was married and divorced to five different husbands and, whether the divorces were scriptural or not, she was still known to be living with a man who was not her husband in what appears to be a consensually, intimate, non-marital co-habitation. Jesus recognized that as being part of what defined her character. She quickly changed the subject by perceiving Him to be a prophet.

4. In I Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul describes a woman cutting off or moving out of her matrimonial relationship with her husband as separation but similar action by the man he described as divorce. Why the difference in words to describe same situations? Is it because of the scriptures in point 3 above; and or because traditionally women could not divorce their husbands? The woman alone was demanded to stay single or reconcile to her husband but not vice versa. Notice how Paul used vice versa in his discussions of all marital issues in I Cor. 7:1-9, 12-16 but used different descriptions for the wife and husband in verses 10 & 11).

Simply put, if the wife leaves but has not committed adultery the husband was not permitted to divorce her (*Mat 5:32*). With the conjunction "and" (*v. 11*) there is a connection in the passage and the two incidents are not to be taken as separate or distinct concerning permissions. Abandonment is not an exception for divorce (*Mat 19:9*) thus Paul's recommendation that she

be reconciled to her husband. Divorce would also show on the part of the husband that his love of the flesh was stronger than his love for Christ or for his wife if he did so (*Eph 5:28*) in not wanting to forgive her (*Mat 18:22*).

5. How can we compare points 3 & 4 above with the SPECIFIC question Jesus was asked in Matthew 19:2 and His response to this question which he finally narrowed down specifically to **"any man"** but not "any woman" **"who divorces HIS WIFE"** but not "HER HUSBAND" **"except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another WOMAN"** here again not another "MAN", **"commits adultery"** (Matt. 19:9).

Although not traditionally done by the Jewish wife under the Mosaic Law, in Mk 10:12 Jesus states that the wife was **also** permitted to divorce her husband for his unfaithfulness (*1 Cor 7:13 is another passage that infers women were divorcing their husbands*). Using this passage shows that other texts that speak of husbands doing the 'putting away' should also apply to the wives. The term "from the beginning" (*Mat 19:4*) is referring to a time pre-Mosaic thus referring to "whoever divorces his wife" (*Mat 19:9*) making it a universal law across all nations, languages, genders and peoples for all time.

I know brethren are quick to interpret Jesus' answer as vice-versa but that is not what is stated there, especially when you compare with His teachings in Matthew 5:32 and Luke 16:18.

Compare Mat 5:32 and Lk 16:18 to Mk 10:12.

Addendum

Lev 20:10 "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Pro 6:32 He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself.

Joh 8:3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. 5 Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do You say?"

Joh 8:7 And as they continued to ask Him, He stood up and said to them, **"Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."**

Joh 8:10 Jesus stood up and said to her, **"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"** 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, **"Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."]]**

Jesus was not here disagreeing with the accusers since He was Mediator of the Mosaic Law (*1 Tim 2:5*) and knew the punishments that were exacted to fit the crime. He was pointing out that their outrage against the adulteress was misplaced and He saw their hearts. Where was the man she was caught with? The Law said both were to be stoned and without that evidence she was set

free.

Charli Yana
August 23, 2019
www.truthdiscovered.net