

HANDLING SEPARATION/DIVORCE BIBLICALLY

BIBLICAL instruction for handling Separation/Divorce

Glen C. Robertson

PERHAPS THE GREATEST sins in the Church today, and those which have had the most impact upon the lives of its people and of those outside the Church, and on Church doctrine and individual Godliness, are those of Divorce and Remarriage. These sins have entered into the very heart of the church body and its members, and now involve the very leadership, perhaps as much as the congregation itself. These sins have destroyed the concept of the family. They have destroyed individuals, particularly those directly involved, and especially the children. And these sins have impacted not only every part of church life, but even also those individuals who haven't committed the sins themselves! So how the Church reacts to these sins will impact the very future of the Church.

These are no merely, "misdemeanors." Even though our Lord told us that we can ask forgiveness for another's sins:

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

John 20:23 The BIBLE

... these are, "Sins unto Death," sins so serious that they cannot be remitted by third parties:

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

1 John 5:16-17 The BIBLE

In any traumatic situation it's important for the church and its members to be sympathetic and understanding, and to do whatever's possible to help them through it and recover. Tragically, while the death of a spouse will usually cause the entire church body to rally around a member, comfort them, and offer whatever help possible, the separating/divorcing person usually receives no such help! The victim is left to suffer on their own; no one comes to call and offer condolence, and no assistance is given the many practical difficulties.

2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

3 Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock.

4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which

was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

5 And they were scattered, because *there is* no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek *after them*.

Ezekiel 34:2-6 The BIBLE

1 Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God.

Isaiah 40:1 The BIBLE

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Romans 12:15 The BIBLE

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

1 Corinthians 12:25-26 The BIBLE

In this same vein, the Church has a dual responsibility - to *both* encourage *and* rebuke!

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all.

I Thessalonians 5:14 The BIBLE

The church often feels, however, that such a situation is too, "messy," to deal with. Such a situation is very sensitive, emotion-laden, and painful. There's often a lot of anger; it's all very unpleasant. But ignoring this sin, or reacting in an unGodly and unBiblical manner is: a) disobedient to God, b) irresponsible and inconsiderate toward all parties involved.

Scripture tells us that divorce is sin. Jesus Himself said it! And the Church has been given the mandate to declare His Words, without equivocation, and without ambiguity.

2 Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman:

3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people;

4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul.

6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.

8 When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Ezekiel 33: 2 The BIBLE

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

I Cor. 14:7-9 The BIBLE

And where the Church makes its stand, first and foremost, is within the church body (its people)!

1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom;

2 Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

II Timothy 4:1-3 The BIBLE

15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Titus 2:15 The BIBLE

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

II Timothy 3:16-17 The BIBLE

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

I Cor. 5:12 The BIBLE

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

I Cor. 6:2-5 The BIBLE

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

I Cor. 5:2 The BIBLE

Given, therefore, this mandate by God to judge between ourselves, it is incumbent upon us to do so!

15 If ye love Me, keep My commandments.

John 14:15 The BIBLE

As Separation and Divorce are sins, to be honest with God and man we must ascertain what decisions have been made, and by whom. Sin has been committed!

The church's present response is generally one of two approaches:

- i) Ignore it.
- ii) Ostracize one or both of the individuals. If ostracising, it is customary to blame the man and comfort the woman.

So, in fact, depending on who they are, or which their gender, the persons involved may also have to suffer the ostracising and hate of the church. Generally no consideration is given to the reasons for the separation/divorce; especially if the separation/divorce is the fault of the woman, one will probably hear things like, "It takes two to Tango," or, "there are two sides to every story," etc., suggesting that it's both their faults. But, most likely, peripheral individuals will take sides, depending on their relationship/nonrelationship with either of the two, or according to each of the divorcing individuals' genders.

For reasons such as the, "Damsel in Distress," concept, it is common to side with the woman; it is fun to help a weak individual; it also feeds the ego. In theory, it's even Scriptural! It is usually also socially unacceptable to blame a woman, especially in today's Feministic/antiChristian culture; to be blamed, a woman generally has to be rabidly vicious and evil, spitting out vitriol at everything wholesome, and taking sadistic and public delight in even the slightest misfortunes of others. It is almost impossible for a man to expect justice if he's a victim of a woman. And, living in the antiChristian world, the church is no different in the way it acts in such situations.

22 Ye shall therefore keep all My statutes, and all My judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out.

23 And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.

Leviticus 20:22-23 The BIBLE

Usually the woman is comforted and vindicated by the church; the guy is ignored and usually vilified by the women in the church, and therefore also by their husbands, who naturally feel pressured by their wives. Therefore, since his friends are often the husbands of his wife's friends, the guy is now deserted by his friends and social circle. In addition, the church often helps the woman find a new home and move, and provides her practical and financial help. In today's left-wing, antiChristian culture, she is never rebuked for leaving Him; on the contrary, she is comforted, counselled, and sheltered. As a result the guy feels attacked and vilified by not only his wife, but now also by his friends and social circle, and also by the church. And, while a man will customarily suffer alone in Stoic silence, a woman will typically publicize her problems and her miseries, and attempt to rally everyone onto her side, and against the person she dislikes. So the guy is now in the situation of not only having lost his wife, but also his children (for the courts, also, by default favor the woman), the children's teachers and friends' families automatically prevent his access to his children, his friends and social circle avoid him, depending on what his wife claims perhaps he has also lost his job and is facing legal charges, he no longer has a place to live, government agencies and their employees refuse to help him, and his church not only fails to comfort him, but is seen helping his wife; the very church, itself, appears to be conspiring against him!

Therefore, after a divorce, the Church unusually never hears from the guy again. Often no church anywhere ever hears from the guy again! He feels abandoned by Christians and by the church who is actually helping her in her sin and her offenses against him. And he is correct. And he feels abandoned by God. If he is in fact contacted by the church, it will usually be merely in support of his transgressing wife! While many comfort and help the wife committing the separation/divorce, no one visits nor encourages her victim, her husband! He often falls away altogether from faith in God.

1 Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord.

2 Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord.

Jeremiah 23:1-2 The BIBLE

2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

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Ezekiel 34:2-6 The BIBLE

The other women in the church, and in the world, see this, and see that if they leave their husbands, they will not only not be rebuked for their sin, but they will in fact become the latest, "victim," in today's feminist victim-glorifying, "Me-too," culture, the heroine in their own wonderful personal soap opera! They see only positive results for their sin, and are therefore encouraged to do the same as the divorcing women in the church.

17 For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.

18 Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.

Esther 1:17-18 The BIBLE

22 Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he (or she) should not return from his (or her) wicked way, by promising him (or her) life:

Ezekiel 13:22 The BIBLE

11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 The BIBLE

Sometimes even her nonChristian friends will begin attending her church for a while, seeing that their sin is accepted. They attend, not because they seek the righteousness of God, but because they seek the fellowship of like-minded people, and see that they can feel justified and comforted in the sin that they have no intention of repenting of, and hopefully ease the guilt that sin inevitably causes. Thus, they add to the culture of nonChristianity and divorce underlying this church body, making it even more unlikely that sin will ever be vilified and rebuked. Rather than being a center for people who have repented of their sin and made Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour, that church becomes in reality a community of unrepentant sinners. While the claim is made by liberal and week-kneed church members that attendance here by such sinners will hopefully eventually cause them to, "become Christians," those liberal members rarely expect, nor even hope, that such, "conversion," will include repentance and turning from their sins of Divorce/Remarriage; they rarely consider it important, because, "isn't everyone doing it?!"

Modern left-wing antiChristian society and liberal churches minimize and discount the concept of sin; "There are only problems, disagreements, misunderstandings, etc.," they say. And if sin, "must be," mentioned it is spoken of only in sermons, not to individuals, and then in only general terms, with few or no specific sins mentioned; by generalizing, and not being specific, sin is easier to ignore; it's more comfortable, that way. For them, the key is to make few, if any, calls to repent of any specific sins. Such matters as, "Getting the most out of life," "Financial Stewardship," "Setting reachable goals," etc., are the subjects of today's Western-society sermons, rather than repentance from sin, and living a holy life that's pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

“Getting specific or demanding about sin is legalistic, makes people uncomfortable, turns people away from church, places a burden on people to do something they might be uncomfortable doing, places responsibility on the pastor to require holiness of people, and makes it necessary for the pastor to explain how to accomplish holiness (and thus provide actual, inconvenient, answers!),” are some of their excuses for not being specific about the uncomfortable concept of sin. This is simply a reflection of modern Western left-wing society, which refuses to be objective, specific, provide answers, and require distinct and difficult results. Left-wing, liberal society is all about, subjectivity, “feel-good,” promising whatever people want to hear, without actually delivering, and then, to cover up the resulting failure of this philosophy, lying about the current situation. Then, if the individual states reality, and that it is not what the leftists want it to be (‘The emperor has no clothes’), left-wing society gets uncomfortable and seeks to disparage him, dubbing him with such labels as, “racist,” “sexist,” “homophobic,” “hater,” etc. Similarly, if the Godly Christian gets specific about sin and calls for repentance, the modern leftist-feministic Church becomes uncomfortable and calls him, “legalistic,” “unloving,” or, “judgmental.”

14 Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.

Job 21:14 The BIBLE

8 Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a Book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:

9 That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord:

10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:

11 Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

Isaiah 30:8-11 The BIBLE

10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the Law, and the Words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in His spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

Zechariah 7:10-12 The BIBLE

Absolutely no specific person is ever mentioned as a sinner, nor called upon to repent. If anyone is ever called upon to change their ways it is phrased as a call to find relief from life’s difficulties, rather than to repent. In other words, the Church seeks to address sin in the manner of this world, rather than how God is and expects of us. In left-wing/antiChristian culture there is no such thing as sin; only difficulties or unfortunate circumstances. Repentance is considered evil self-hate, something to be vilified and overcome (despite the supposed evilness of correcting others, this present society itself seeks to correct and stop those who rebuke and preach against sin! – typical of their hypocrisy). In this feminine/feminist (and therefore insecure and unconfident) society, universal acceptance of everything (disguised as, “diversity”), and making people feel good about themselves, is seen as the ultimate purpose of society, the preeminent good, the most important goal. Therefore any attempt at correcting someone (labelled as, “shaming,”) is portrayed as evil. This antiChristian attitude must, itself, be rebuked and resisted by the Godly person.

20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

Isaiah 5:20-21 The BIBLE

4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them.

Proverbs 28:4 The BIBLE

In today's left-wing, antiChristian society, no one is to blame for anything, and everyone is to blame for everything. Under this left-wing, antiChristian culture, there are certain groups who are sacrosanct, categories of people who cannot be rebuked or blamed for anything: identifiable minorities, nonChristian religions, disabled people, women, Sodomists, socialists, and others. Therefore no one (except for certain categories of people) is corrected; it is considered scandalous if anyone is ever rebuked!

15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

Leviticus 19:15 The BIBLE

Almost the only groups that can be blamed or rebuked are men, whites, nonSodomists, Christians, and conservatives. And therefore men are ready-made victims. And the Church joins in, adopting this same sinful culture, rather than rebuking it and living outside of and in opposition to it!

15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.

Proverbs 17:15 The BIBLE

SO, WHAT THEN DO WE DO?

So Scripture commands the Church to, not "justify the wicked and condemn the just," but condemn the sin and sinner, and comfort the victim! And, to do so, we must identify the sin and the sinner, and the victim(s). Indeed, no person nor relationship is perfect and without sin. But that must have no relevance in identifying the sinfulness of separation/divorce, itself, and therefore the person who has committed it! The sin itself must be recognized as such, rebuked as such, and repented of as such. Without this the root of bitterness and sin will remain.

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Hebrews 12:15 The BIBLE

And without identifying and properly responding to the sin as sin, we will be perpetuating the sin, increasing the likelihood that it will continue and even be repeated, and ignoring the effect that it has on its victims. And then, separately, after rooting out and destroying the sin itself, we can properly address its causes. For instance, we don't come across a rape and immediately rebuke the victim for how she is dressing! And we don't come upon a robbery and right away attempt to address the matter of poverty, or blame the victim for being so ostentatiously wealthy, before stopping the actual crime/sin being committed, regardless of however much the poverty was a motivating factor in the crime/sin! We first of all stop the sin/crime being committed by the perpetrator, and rebuke it as such, otherwise they will commit it again, at a future time, when the perpetrator arbitrarily decides that the sin/crime is justified to be committed yet again! Addressing its causes, whatever they may be in either party, is an entirely different matter altogether, from the sin itself! But to immediately start blaming, "both sides," is to justify the sin, and to minimize the pain of the victim! Similarly, we immediately call for an end to the separation/divorce, labelling it for what it is: a sin. And only then can we adequately address

the root causes of it. Otherwise we risk justifying the sin, putting qualifications, conditions, and limitations on obedience to the Lord, and minimizing the pain the sin is causing its victims, as though the victim has brought it upon themselves. There often (but not by any means always!) will indeed be blame on both sides. But sin is never justified, no matter how strong the desire for it, reasons or no reasons! Bank robbery is always wrong, no matter the poverty. Murder is always wrong, no matter the rage. Divorce is never justified for anything other than the other person's adultery; Jesus said it!

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Matthew 5:31-32 The BIBLE

... and, to make sure there is no doubt about what He has said in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus repeats Himself in chapter 19:

4 And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He Which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

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?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 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.

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.

Matthew 19:4-9 The BIBLE

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Acts 17:30 The BIBLE

And, to make absolutely certain there can be no doubt as to what He has said, our Heavenly Father records the same interactions yet again in His Word, in Mark 10 and in Luke 16, and elsewhere throughout Scripture. There may be cases such as violence for which enforced separation is necessary for the safety of one or both of the partners, but separation for whatever reason, even that, in no way justifies actual divorce; Jesus and Scripture say that marriage is made in heaven, and lasts until one of the partners dies

10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 The BIBLE

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?

2 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.

3 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 adul-

teress, though she be married to another man.

Romans 7:1-3 The BIBLE

Therefore, in many passages throughout Scripture our Heavenly Father makes absolutely certain that we have no doubt that, except for physical adultery by the other partner, marriage is sacred to God throughout life, and absolutely indissoluble.

WE DO NOT, “SWEEP IT UNDER THE RUG!” WE BE DECISIVE!

The Church today has become anemic in its message and its actions. Modern society has become, at best, indecisive and understated, and at worst, antichristian. It stands for nothing, and accepts everything. Tragically, the Church has followed suit. Hence, both the world and the Church (when it is like the world) are hated by few, and accepted by everyone. Any individual or group that dares to stand up for anything is labeled as a, “hater.”

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:11 The BIBLE

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

II Peter 3:17 The BIBLE

Jesus was anything but indecisive or undogmatic; He was either loved or hated, and it made an irreversible impact on the world for the rest of history. To make the impact upon lives and the world that God intends His Church to make we must be/do the same. We don't preach against sin because we necessarily expect other people to repent, but because of our responsibility to proclaim the Word of God and preach against sin! In other words, we don't preach because of THEIR responsibility, but because of OUR responsibility! So we preach and stand against sin because GOD preaches against sin, and tells us to also, regardless of whatever reason or excuse we might have otherwise! It is up to us to sow the seed. It is up to GOD to bring the increase!

17 Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, Where Is the God of judgment?

Malachi 2:17 The BIBLE

9 I wrote unto you in an Epistle not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

I Corinthians 5: 9 The BIBLE