

## XXIV. Marriage and Divorce

### A. Definition of marriage

---

1. *Marriage is to be between one man and one woman. It is not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, or for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.*

2. *Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with legitimate offspring and of the church with godly children, and for the prevention of sexual immorality.*

---

#### 1. Origin

**When was marriage created?**

**To whom does marriage apply?**

#### 2. Definition

Between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (*Matt. 19:5*)

**What about polygamy even among believers in the Old Testament?** (*Matt. 5*)

### B. Purpose

#### 1. What was marriage ordained for?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (*Gen. 2*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (*Gen. 1:28, Heb. 13:4*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (*Mal. 2:15*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (*Song of Solomon, 1 Cor. 7:2-5*)

#### 2. Wrong views of the purpose of marriage

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## C. Who can marry

---

3. *It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able to give their intelligent consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. Therefore, those who profess the true reformed religion should not marry unbelievers, Roman Catholics, or other idolaters; nor should Christians be unequally yoked by marrying those who are notoriously wicked in their way of living or hold to damnable heresies.*

4. *Marriage ought not to take place between persons who are within the degrees of close relationship by blood or by marriage forbidden by the Word. Such incestuous marriages can never be made lawful—so that such persons may live together as man and wife—by any law of man or by the consent of the parties involved.*

---

### 1. Equally yoked

**A believer must marry \_\_\_\_\_**

1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14-16

**“Intelligent Consent”**

1 Cor. 7:36-39

### 2. Degrees of blood

**Incest & unlawful marriage**

Lev. 18 and 20; 1 Cor. 5

**American revision**

The American revision strikes the final sentence from the original paragraph 4:

*The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own; nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than of her own.*

*If a man marries his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has violated the intimacy that belongs to his brother; they will be childless. (Ex. 20:21)*

Mark 6:18; Ruth

*Deut 25:5: When brothers live on the same property and one of them dies without a son, the wife of the dead man may not marry a stranger outside the family. Her brother-in-law is to take her as his wife, have sexual relations with her, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law for her.*

## D. Divorce

---

5. *Adultery or fornication committed after engagement, if detected before marriage, gives valid reason to the innocent party to break the engagement. In the case of adultery after marriage it is lawful for the innocent party to seek a divorce and after the divorce to remarry just as if the offending party were dead.*

6. *Although the corruption of mankind is such that people are apt to seek arguments to justify unwarranted separation of those whom God has joined together in marriage, nothing but adultery or such willful desertion as cannot be remedied by the church or the civil authorities is sufficient cause to dissolve the bond of marriage. In such cases a public and orderly procedure is to be observed, and the persons concerned are not to be left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.*

---

The Confession gives two grounds for divorce:

### 1. Adultery

Deut. 22

Deut. 24: 1-4:

*"If a man marries a woman, but she becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, he may write her a divorce certificate, hand it to her, and send her away from his house. <sup>2</sup> If after leaving his house she goes and becomes another man's wife, <sup>3</sup> and the second man hates her, writes her a divorce certificate, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house or if he dies, <sup>4</sup> the first husband who sent her away may not marry her again after she has been defiled, because that would be detestable to the LORD.*

Two views of this passage by the Jews based on what is meant by "indecent" (Hebrew *ervâ*):

- 
- 

Matt. 5:27-28, 31-32:

<sup>27</sup> *"You have heard that it was said, **Do not commit adultery.** <sup>28</sup> But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart....*

<sup>31</sup> *"It was also said, **Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.** <sup>32</sup> But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*

"sexual immorality" = *porneia* in Greek

Matt. 19:1-9

## 2. Desertion

1 Cor. 7:13-15:

*If any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. <sup>14</sup> For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. <sup>15</sup> But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace.*

**What about desertion by a believer?**

**What constitutes “willful desertion?”**

**Reasons, not requirements.**

## 3. Abuses of Divorce

a) *Unwarranted divorce*

**No-Fault Divorce**

b) *Forbidding divorce when divorce is appropriate*