

(1) Or do you not know, brothers --- for I am speaking those who know the Law --- that the Law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by the Law to her husband while he lives, but, if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress.

(4) Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the Law through the Body of Christ, so that you may belong to another --- to Him who has been raised from the dead --- in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the Law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the Law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit...and not in the old way of the written code.

(7) What then shall we say? That the Law is sin? By no means!! Yet if it had not been for the Law, I would have not known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin--- seizing an opportunity through the commandment --- produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the Law, sin lies dead.

(9) I was once alive apart from the Law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive --- and I died! The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and, through it, killed me. So, the Law is holy and righteous and good!

Think on These Things:

- 1) How long are human beings subject to God's Law? **Our whole lives (v. 1).**
- 2) When is a believer free to be remarry with God's blessing? This is a hard teaching, actually. Jesus said Moses gave the allowance to divorce because men's hearts are hard (see Matthew 19:1-9). Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-16. Along with the Matthew passage, there appear to be three valid reasons for permitting divorce --- but not remarriage. What are the three allowances?

If one spouse dies, the other is permitted to remarry with God's blessing.

The three accepted reasons for divorce are: 1) sexual immorality (e.g., adultery, family sexual abuse, Matthew 19:9); 2) being unwilling to have sexual relations (conjugal rights, 1 Corinthians 7:4-5); and 3) the non-Christian spouse quitting the marriage to the Christian spouse because of conflicting beliefs (1 Corinthians 7:15).

- 3) How does God view a married couple (Matthew 19:4-5)? **As one unity (one flesh, a couple)**
- 4) How does marriage, then divorce, then remarriage apply to a believer who comes to faith AFTER these life experiences?

When a believer comes to faith and asks God for forgiveness of his/her past, God forgives and forgets the past. Nothing about the first marriage, divorce, and then remarriage(s) will be held against the new believer.

- 5) What about when these things happen after becoming a believer? (Matthew 12:31; Mark 3:29)

Remarriage to a new spouse while the first spouse still lives --- is a sin. The husband becomes an adulterer, the wife an adulteress (v. 3). 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 says IF couples divorce, they are to remain unmarried or to reconcile to each other. **BUT --- divorce is NOT the unforgivable sin!!** Therefore, it is up to God to show grace and mercy to those who don't keep this law regarding marriage and divorce, but who do --- at some point --- sincerely seek God's forgiveness.

- 6) How should that believer's "church" deal with him/her wanting to remain in the fellowship after divorcing (see Galatians 6:1-5)? Do you think divorce is a worse sin than living together like a married couple --- but unmarried --- or overeating, or murdering another person? Is it okay for a believer who is now divorced to remarry?

When a church's spiritual leaders are aware of this issue, they are responsible to address the couple with humility and in a spirit of restoration. Similarly, they should also address any couples 'living together' unmarried. Neither "sin" is worse than the other, and forgiveness is available to the one(s) who truly repent and turn to the Lord. At a minimum, any divorced church member considering remarriage to anyone other than their 1st spouse, should be exposed to the biblical teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. They are then responsible and accountable to God for their decision....

- 7) V. 4 of today's text says that humanity's first "husband", God's Law, must die so we can marry another. Who should we be "married" to?

To Him who has been raised from the dead --- that is, Jesus!

- 8) We are told that the Law is holy (v. 12). So, what is the problem with God's Law (see vs. 7-11)? Does the Law cause us to sin (v. 7) or help us recognize when we do sin?

God's Law is holy and righteous. It was given as a guide to "aide" us until Jesus came (Galatians 3:21-26). The Law does NOT cause us to sin. But, the Law does define what sinful behavior is, and so by it we stand convicted and under judgment. That's the dynamic of the struggle: the Law is perfect, but in people it points out our imperfections!

- 9) What was the purpose of God's Law, given through Moses, to the Jews? See Galatians 3:19-25.

The Law served as our 'guardian' until Christ came. Now that He has come and we no longer need such a guardian; we can be justified before God by our faith (v. 24).

- 10) When the Law helps us to see how sinful we are, we also grasp that the fruit of being sinful people is death (v. 5). How are Christians expected to serve and obey God today (v. 6)? How do we break through the bonds of the Law's written code (see Matthew 22:36-40)?

We are to serve God according to the spirit of the Law. Jesus said this was possible by valuing just two key laws: Love God with all our heart; and love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves. Actions based on principles of love both eliminate and fulfill the written rules!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: