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No. 1

When Does God Recognize Marriage?

By Harold Turner

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." (Heb. 13:4.)

From the above scripture, it is evident that God does not recognize all intimate relationships to be right. The only intimate relationship that God recognizes and approves of is marriage. In 1 Cor. 7:2 Paul said, "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Only in the marriage relationship is the bed undefiled. All other relationships are sinful and wrong.

Within our society there are many intimate situations that are acceptable with society, but which are wrong in the sight of God. God designed one acceptable relationship between a man and a woman. God's plan is that one man and one woman be united together in marriage for as long as they both live. Since marriage is only an earthly relationship, when either one of this union dies, the other is free to marry again. But what about divorce? Does God recognize a marriage between people who have previously divorced their first mate? The Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? Jesus answered this by saying, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." (Mark 10:2, 11-12.) In Matt. 19:9 Jesus did recognize one ground for divorce. He said, "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." Fornication is the only thing that Jesus recognizes as providing a ground for divorce and making it possible for the innocent party to remarry. One who puts away their mate for any reason other than fornication and marries another enters an adulterous relationship. In Rom. 7:2, 3 the Bible states, "For the woman which hath

a 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."

Our legal system grants divorce for nearly any and every reason. If two people feel that they are just not compatible, they can get a divorce on this basis, and seek for someone that is more suitable. We might add that com-

patibility is attained by much effort and adjustment on the part of both parties of the marriage. In Titus 2:3, 4 Paul said that the older women were to teach the younger women to love their husbands. You may have to work at loving your mate, but this is what God commands us to do. Divorce is not the answer to problems in marriage. No matter what our legal systems may say or grant, it is to God that we must be accountable.

But what about people who are not Christians, and who know nothing about God's plan for marriage, are they account-

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Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

By Mike Pace

While the problems of marriage, divorce and remarriage are raging, perhaps it would be wise for us each to consider some 'preventive' advice.

Christian men, who believe strongly in the Lord's teachings of our individual commitments in marriage and to our families, sometimes feel perplexed or puzzled by the complexity of sexual urges. When we realize that God made us beings with sexual desires, and that along with those desires, He also gives us certain 'preventive' directives for our safety, we'll better understand our purpose and responsibilities in this sensitive area.

* "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good," Romans 12:9. In other words, use common sense with male-female relationships. Beware of trusting yourself too much. Use extreme caution, go the 'extra mile' to insure that your intentions are honorable, and that you might never be misunderstood.

* "Evil companions corrupt good morals". (I Corinthians 15:33). Choose

your close friends from couples with strong marriages. Frequent exposure to a friend who is not totally committed to God's law of marriage may just be a damaging effect upon your marriage.

* Be sure to always tell your mate about your friendships. This can be of great value in keeping relationships above board, out in the open and above reproach.

* Be willing and prepared to back off! Occasionally a relationship will get out of hand, and we need to be aware of where it can lead us. Listen to the Apostle Paul, "Flee from sexual immorality." (I Cor. 6:18.) To "flee" is to drop everything and run for our very life. Let's never overstep the line of self-control. If God's will is precious to us, if we respect God's wisdom in these matters, there will never be any doubt in our minds where to draw the line or what step to take.

* The two most important aspects of our marriage must be commitment to one another, and trust and reliance in each other. Just as our Lord is faithful to us, so must we follow in His footsteps.

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EDITOR Mike Pace
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What's in a Name?

By Mike Pace

The American Indian gave his children a name which he thought they deserved. They were not named at birth as is our custom, but rather at some point, even years, later. The Indian girls were given names like "Smiling Eyes", "Laughing Heart" and "White Swan". While the Indian boys were given names like "Swift

Eagle", "Running Bear" or "Brave One." Not all the Indian names were so complimentary. Names such as "Sharp Tongue", "Lazy Dog", "Weak Heart" or "Crazy One" were given when the parents thought they were deserved. When we consider that these names were given as a result of the traits demonstrated, we can better appreciate the name of the one to whom it was given. We can also know a little about that person by the name they wear.



In Matt. 14:1-4 Herod had taken his brother Philip's wife. John the Baptist was placed in prison by Herod because John had preached that it was not lawful for Herod to have his brother's wife. Why was it not lawful? Herod was not a Christian. This passage evidently illustrates that God's laws concerning marriage apply to all. As Heb. 13:3 stated, "Marriage is honorable in all . . ." Not just for all Christians, but for all people. Anyone who has broken these marriage laws, whether or not he is a Christian, must repent of them before he can be right with God.

God has so named His children, also. He has given us a "new name", (Isaiah 62:2.) a name after His own Son. Just think for a minute how it would be if we were to be named for a trait that we exhibit in our lives. We would be wearing names like "Zealous One", or "Meek One", or "Helpful Hands" or "Gracious Heart." But if God were to give us each individual names after own personal traits, would we be wearing names such as "Stingy One" or "Lazy Servant" or "Irregular Attender", or "Back Biter", or "Constant Complainer", or "_____". Which would He name you?

But what does repentance involve in an adulterous situation? It involves the same thing that it does for a polygamist, a homosexual, or any other type of relationship that is wrong. Can the homosexual continue to live in this sinful state? Certainly not. Repentance means that he must stop living in this sin. Can the polygamist continue to live in this sinful relationship? Certainly not. Repentance demands that he stop living in this sin. Why should it be any different for an adulterer? It isn't. Adultery is sin. To repent of sin involves our putting an end to the sin. Paul showed in Rom. 6:2 that when we die to sin we must not live any longer therein. When we put the sin of adultery to death, we must not live any longer therein.

It would be tragic to be named such a name as the last ones we mentioned, but the real tragedy would exist in CONTINUING to be deserving of the less complimentary name. Paul told the Corinthians they had been deserving of some bad names (I Corinthians 6:9-11), "But you have been washed, but you have been sanctified, but you have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." Exactly the same thing can be said of us too as we have been "washed", "sanctified", and "justified". Therefore, let us each live deserving of the "new name."

Marriage in honorable, but fornication and adultery are sinful relationships. God recognizes no relationship other than marriage. If you have been married, and have put away your mate for a cause other than fornication, you are not free to remarry. And if you do, it is not a marriage that God recognizes. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery . . ." Too, Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matt. 19:6.)

WHEN DOES GOD RECOGNIZE MARRIAGE?

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able to his laws governing marriage; First, ignorance does not dismiss the fact of sin. This same question could be asked regarding a polygamist. In some countries polygamy is practiced and accepted. What if the polygamist learned that God allows only one wife for one man? What is he to do? Is his having more than one wife sin? What if he loves all his wives, and has children by all of them? Will God overlook his situation because he was ignorant? Can he remain married to all of his wives and become a Christian? God says, No! Polygamy is sin, and it must be repented of before one can become a Christian. It was not knowledge of God's will and a willful action that made this sin. It is sin whether or not one knows God's laws. The same is true of adultery. Adultery is sin, and it must be repented of in order to become a Christian.

The people of Corinth were guilty of adultery before becoming a Christian (1 Cor. 6:9-11). How did they become adulterous? Jesus defined adultery as being united in a marriage following a divorce for a cause other than fornication (Matt. 19:9). Adultery is a marriage that God has not bound together. Notice again Paul's statement in Rom. 7:2, 3. When was this woman called an adulteress? It was when she was married to another man and her husband still living. The people of Corinth were guilty of adultery before becoming a Christian, therefore they had evidently been married to someone that God did not recognize as their mate. Since adultery is a sin, they would have to repent of it before becoming a Christian. Their being ignorant of God's laws regarding marriage did not excuse or justify them.

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THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT

By W. C. Anderson

This subject is misunderstood by many people. We believe that if more people understood the teaching of the Bible on this subject, there would not be so many religious denominations. More people would become members of the religious body known as "the church of Christ." If you are not a member of this church, please study with me the subject now under consideration. Read each reference given and I am sure you will come to a better knowledge of what the Holy Ghost does in the saving process.

There is an idea extant that in order for a sinner to be converted, God must send the Holy Spirit directly into his heart and change it. It may seem strange to some when we say that there is not even one example in the Bible of God doing this. There are examples of the Holy Spirit coming upon people, but never was it for the purpose of converting them to God.

Open your Bible to First Samuel and read verses 18 to 24 of chapter 19. You will learn that King Saul was trying to kill David. He sent a company of messengers to take David. When they came into the presence of David and the elderly prophet Samuel, the Spirit of God came upon them, they prophesied and could not take David. Three bands of messengers were sent by Saul and the same happened to all. Last of all he went, and behold the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied. He was thus prevented from taking David. But this miraculous coming of the Spirit did not convert Saul. He did not change his attitude toward David. He continued to seek the young man's life. He afterward threw a javelin at his own son. This was the spear with which he had intended to kill David.

God's purpose in sending the Spirit on Saul and his messengers was to keep Saul from killing David, and he accomplished his purpose. Since God accomplished his purpose then, we conclude that if God intends to convert people by sending his Spirit upon them now, he will surely do as he wishes. If God does send the Holy Ghost on people to save them now, he must save everybody because he doesn't want anybody to be lost.

It is written that God "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should

come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9.) Can't you see that if our being converted, our being saved, is dependent on the Holy Spirit's coming upon us, that God is honor bound to send the Spirit on every sinner?

That is not God's way of saving. After Judas Iscariot has gone to betray Christ, our Lord taught his disciples that he would send the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, which said he, "is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) The teaching of Christ was that the Spirit would come to the apostles and guide them into all truth. There is nothing said in the Bible about the Holy Ghost coming upon lost souls to save them from sin. He came on the apostles to teach the word of God through them.

If you will study closely the following scriptures you will see that the Holy Spirit would come to the people of God, the souls already saved. He said to his apostles, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:16, 17.) Again Jesus said, "The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) There is not one promise of Christ that he would send the Holy Spirit directly to sinners to save them. He always taught the word through certain inspired people.

The Holy Spirit saved souls only in the sense that he taught the word. He never entered any person to save them. He taught the lost souls. He put the word into the lost, and when they obeyed the word they were saved.

The Holy Ghost came on Cornelius and the people in his home, but not to save them. They had to hear the words that Peter spoke and obey those words in order to be saved.

This is written: "Send men to Joppa,

and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter . . . he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." (Acts 10:5, 6.) This is also written: "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11:13, 14.) Cornelius and his household were saved by obeying the words that Peter spoke to them. They were not saved by the Holy Ghost baptism which they experienced.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost on Gentiles that day convinced the Jews present that Gentiles could be saved by the gospel of Christ. Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." (Acts 10:47, 48.)

The Holy Spirit taught the word through men during the early days of the church. He teaches it now through the Bible (Hebrews 1:1, 2.)

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is most important. The willingness to forgive is essential to the welfare of society as well as the individual. It benefits the person forgiving and the person being forgiven. Unless we are able to forgive we will suffer, and we will cause others to suffer. Forgiveness, next to love is perhaps the most essential ingredients of the Christian life, and love is not real unless it prompts one to forgive.

Forgiveness carries with it the idea of a complete release. Thayer defines the word from the Greek to mean: "To release as from bondage or imprisonment, forgiveness or pardon from sins." This word is related to another word which means: bond, or connection. If we combine these principles, we have this thought; "I will forgive what you have done and love you as though you had never done it." Until we come to this place in our Christian development, we have not truly begun to live the Christian life.

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I Guess I am an "ANTI"

By Ted Knight

In a recent gospel meeting not too far away from my home, I was told upon my arrival that one of the elders had received a call prior to the meeting dates informing him that "Ted Knight is an anti." The elder has known me for several years and was aware of the stand that I have taken in regard to church cooperation and church support of the orphan homes among us. However, I thought about this situation and have concluded that as much as I dislike all the various labels that we sometimes use, I guess I am an 'anti'. There are some things being taught in the Church today which I am strongly opposed to and if that makes me an 'anti' then I plead guilty.

If believing that the laws of God respecting marriage apply to the alien sinner as well as the Christian, and that the person living in adultery must stop living in adultery upon obedience to the gospel makes me an 'anti' so be it. I am aware of the difficult circumstances that are often involved and that much heartache may result from our breaking relationships which were formed in ignorance, but the Lord either meant what He said in reference to repentance or He didn't mean it. In Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38, II Peter 3:9, Acts 17:30-31, and many other passages we are told of the necessity of repentance. The Lord did not say that it would be easy to repent or convenient to do so, but He did declare that one must repent or perish.

If believing that the guilty party in the case of adultery is not free to remarry makes me 'anti' then the label fits. I cannot see how we can miss the Lord's clear teachings in Matt. 19:9. The adulterer is simply not afforded the privilege of remarriage and to do so is to endanger ones' soul!

If believing and teaching that Christians must not engage in social drinking, dancing, immodest dress, and other forms of evil make me an 'anti' then I 'are' one. James emphatically teaches us that friendship with the world places us against God in James 4:4 and John echos the same sentiment in I John 2:15-17. One of the great needs of our day is for members of the Body of Christ to live pure and holy lives. Parents need to instill such teachings in their children and watch them as they develop into that 'peculiar people,

royal priesthood and holy nation' that Peter refers to in I Peter 2:9-10.

If believing that the Church is to be in subjection to the elders as they exercise their God given responsibility in watching for our souls makes me an 'anti' then I must be one. Elders DO have authority and it is the duty of every Child of God to submit ourselves to that rule as long as it is in harmony with God's will. (Heb. 13:17.) To say that qualified men who have been set in the office of elder do not have authority is to destroy the effectiveness of that work and rebel against God's plain teaching.

If believing that the word of God alone is a sufficient guide in all religious matters and that we do not need a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit to know what to do to be saved, makes me an 'anti' then I plead guilty again. The Word of God is still as effective as it has ever been and will bring us the same blessings as it has brought in the past. The gospel is still God's power to save. (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; James 1:21.) I am not waiting for the Holy Spirit to speak to me and give me additional information as to what the Lord wants me to do. If I did wait for that I would die outside of Christ because it isn't going to happen.

If opposing the gimmicks, gadgets and promotions that many have used and may still be using to try to bring people to Christ makes me an 'anti' I guess I am one. All over the country we have learned that these things do not work and the quicker we dispense with those things and get back to simply preaching the truth in love from house to house the quicker we will see the Church begin to grow as it once grew.

Yes, I guess I am 'anti' many things. If you are a genuine Christian you are too! If you oppose sin you are an 'anti'! I really would prefer that we do away with all these labels which do nothing but create hard feelings among us and bring

"A joy that's shared is a joy made double." John Ray

"Total abstinence is easier than perfect moderation." St. Augustine

greater division. Our Father calls upon us to simply be New Testament Christians and that in itself is quite a challenge and requires all that I am and have. But, the rewards are indeed worth any price that I must pay in order to be a simple Christian.

FORGIVENESS

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Jesus said, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:25). It is not that God is not big enough or that he is not capable of forgiving us without our forgiving others, but if God forgave us without our forgiving others we would fall far below that high standard by which our lives are to be fashioned.

Some will say; "I'd forgive him if he would ask me." Others will say; "He won't forgive anybody — why should I forgive him?" This kind of thinking is sinful. God always forgives in a merciful way. If God only forgave us as we deserved to be forgiven we would all die and be lost eternally.

Jesus said, "As ye would that men do to you, do ye even so to them." When we reach this state of Christian development we will begin to enjoy life — not before.

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