

**ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD'S LAW #4**  
**(Teaching On MDR In Gospels & Romans)**

**A. Our purpose is to present in as clear & concise a manner as possible the Lord's teaching on MDR.**

**B. Though some would have us believe the subject to be very complicated, it is instead rather simple.**

1. What often happens, though, is that people get into some very complicated situations after being joined by God in marriage, & then they find it extremely difficult to repent & comply with His clearly stated will.
  
2. Many times they just end up doing what they want to do anyway, regardless of what the Bible teaches.
  
3. To add the problem, people can find preachers, teachers & elders to defend every possible position on MDR.

**C. Marriage is the beautiful flower of human relationship, which God ordained in the very beginning.**

1. He set its boundaries wherein it would continue to radiate its beauty in the wisdom of God.

2. However, the boundaries sometimes get lost in a maze of confusion over personal relationships in marriage.

[**The** purpose of this lesson is to give us a foundation whereby we should be able to make judgments on particular cases.]

## I. JESUS & THE PHARISEES (MATT 19:1-10)

### A. **Avoiding the controversy between the Rabbis, Jesus answered the Pharisee's question.**

1. He showed that God's marriage ordinance had been in place from the beginning of time; it was never repealed or replaced & it will continue to the end.

### B. **How did the Rabbi's stand on divorce?**

1. The school of **Hillel**: for any reason (Deut 24:1)
  - a. Interpreted "some unseemly thing" (kjv); "uncleanness" (nkjv) as *any slight offense or dislike of personality or manners.*
2. The school **Shammai**: for sexual immorality only
  - a. Interpreted...as *adultery, or the discovery that she was not pure when they married.*

3. But both schools were wrong to teach that God commanded divorce; it was not a command, it was a **sufferance** (*passive permission; tolerance*).

**C. So we must start any discussion on MDR with the words of Jesus (Matt 19:5-6).**

1. There Jesus quoted Genesis 2:24, but His next statement is not in the Genesis record.

- a. “*Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.*”

- b. The closest statement to that is in the OT.

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**Mal 2:16** – “For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one’s garment with *violence*,” says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal *treacherously*”.

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[**Although** not stated as such in Genesis chapter 2, the Lord’s statement in Matthew 19:6 has always been God’s original intent behind His marriage ordinance.]

## **II. MATTHEW 19:9**

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**Matt 19:9** – And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for **sexual immorality** [*porneia*], & marries another, commits **adultery** [*moichao (moy-khah’-o)*]; AND whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

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**Marriage requires:** terms, promises, ratification (legal).

**Divorce** is *apoluo* (ap-ol-oo'-o): **VINE'S** – “to let loose from, let go free” (apo, “from,” luo, “to loose”). **STRONG'S** – to free fully, i.e. (literally) relieve, release, dismiss, or (figuratively) let die, pardon or (specially) divorce.

**In most societies**, there is a legal aspect to marriage & divorce (certain laws must be complied with before it is recognized). **This** prevents someone from just verbally declaring himself to be “married” or “divorced”, which might grant him certain legal rights.

**We** will also notice that Jesus does recognize divorce, whether for a right or wrong cause. **However**, as we shall see, if someone is divorced for the wrong cause then the marriage bond, which God creates, still exists.

**A. The case presented is of a man who “divorces” his wife.**

1. When that man “marries another” he “commits adultery.”

a. The marriage bond between him & his first wife still exists.

2. But if his wife was guilty of “sexual immorality”.

a. Then the implication is that he can divorce her, marry another & NOT commit adultery.

**B. The second clause states that whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**

### III. MATTHEW 5:32

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**Matt 5:32** – But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except **sexual immorality** [*porneia*] causes her to commit **adultery** [*moichao (moy-khah'-o)*]; AND whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits **adultery** [*moichao (moy-khah'-o)*].

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#### A. **This is a warning to any man who is considering divorcing his wife.**

1. If he divorces her, he “causes her to commit adultery.”
  - a. He puts her into a position where she may enter a relationship with another man, while the marriage bond with her first husband still exists.
  - b. This also implies, that if he divorces her FOR “sexual immorality” then he does NOT cause her to commit sin because she is already guilty of sin.
  - c. Under the OT, these were to be put to death.

#### B. **The second clause states that whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**

## IV. LUKE 16:18

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**Luke 16:18** – Whoever divorces his wife & marries another commits **adultery** [**moichao (moy-khah'-o)**]; AND whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits **adultery** [**moichao (moy-khah'-o)**].

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### A. A man commits adultery when he divorces his wife & marries another.

1. Divorce does not equal adultery; adultery comes into play when he remarries.
2. But once divorced, both parties may be caused to commit adultery (cf. **Matt 5:32**).

### B. The second clause states that whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

## V. MARK 10:11-12

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**Mark 10:11-12** – So He said to them, “Whoever divorces **HIS** wife & marries another commits **adultery against her**. 12 And if a **WOMAN** divorces her husband & marries another, she commits **adultery**.”

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### A. A man commits adultery against his wife when he divorces her & marries another.

**B. All ordinances regarding MDR apply equally to male & female.**

1. Therefore, a woman commits adultery against her husband when she divorces him & marries another.

[**You** may be asking why Jesus didn't make the cross application in Matthew.

**Hebrew** society in Jesus' day didn't allow women to divorce their adulterous husbands, so making the cross application wasn't necessary.

**However**, Jesus knew that NOT all societies & customs would be the same; so in the gospel of Mark, (taken to Gentiles), He included the cross application.]

## **VI. ROMANS 7:1-3**

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**Rom 7:2-3** – For the woman who has a husband is bound by [the: definite article not present in Greek text] law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, **while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress**; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

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**A. A “law” exists between a wife & her husband for as long as he lives.**

1. That law is divine; it is of God (**Gen 2:24**).

- a. “*What God has joined together, let not man separate*” (Matt 19:6).

**B. If a woman’s husband dies, she is free from that divine law & she is permitted to marry another man.**

1. But she will be an adulteress if she marries another man while her husband is alive.

## **VII. SUMMARY**

**A. There is (1) scriptural cause for divorce:**

1. Sexual immorality (fornication, adultery, marital infidelity of the sexual relationship).

**B. There are (2) scriptural allowances for remarriage:**

1. When a person’s spouse had died.
2. When a person has had to end a marriage to a spouse who had committed sexual immorality.

## VIII. A FEW QUESTIONS ANSWERED QUICKLY

### A. “**What if the guilty...divorces the innocent...?**”

1. The words Jesus used in His teaching on MDR indicate that the innocent is proactive in the process of a scriptural divorce.
  
2. The important matter is not who sues whom for divorce, but what was the cause for the divorce.
  - a. If the cause is adultery, then the innocent, in order to be free to remarry, must acknowledge openly that scriptural cause for the divorce.
  
  - b. If the cause is not adultery, then neither party is free to remarry.

### C. “**What if two people divorce (not for adultery), & later one of them marries, doesn't that free the other to marry too?**”

1. No! The first divorce was not on the grounds of adultery, so the marriage bond still exists.
  
2. The one who married again is guilty of adultery, & the other may not remarry without committing adultery too.

**D. Since the word Jesus used for divorce really means “to release or to dismiss”, can’t that also be done after a civil divorce settlement?**

1. This is a question used to justify a second “putting away” of a marriage after it has been dissolved through civil court proceedings.
  - a. That would allow for an innocent party to remarry after the guilty remarries or commits adultery.
  
2. But Jesus never referred to a second “putting away”, once a marriage had ended.
  
3. He simply said, “Who ever marries a woman [man] who is divorced commits adultery.”

**E. Is there more than once cause for a scriptural divorce?**

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**Luke 18:29-30** – So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, **there is no one who has left** house or parents or brothers or **WIFE** or children, **for the sake of the kingdom of God**, 30 who shall not receive many times more in this present time, & in the age to come eternal life.”

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1. {Mental & physical abuse; forbidden to attend assemblies; coerce into sins or illegal activity, etc.}

2. Jesus used different words:

- a. **“Left”** – aphiemi (af-ee'-ay-mee); to send forth, to go.
- b. **“Divorce”** – apolua (ap-ol-oo-o); to let loose from, let go free.

2. So He wasn't talking about divorce, & He certainly was not making another allowance for remarriage.

3. The most obvious case where one may leave a spouse for the sake of the kingdom of God is when he or she has had to divorce a spouse for sexual immorality.

## CLOSING

**A. It has often been said**, that we spend too much time talking about how a person can scripturally get out of a marriage, & too little time teaching what God has said about developing a healthy & happy marriage – as He would have it.

**B. I certainly do not intend to make that mistake**, but, for our purposes today, it was necessary to cover this material.

**C. Now that we understand God's laws regarding MDR**, we can think back on our previous lessons on how these laws apply to all men.