

honor God. Paul wrote, “A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 7:39). This principle applies to remarriage after divorce as well: it should occur only within the boundaries of God’s Word and to someone who shares the faith of the one remarrying.

Seeking counsel from trusted Christian leaders or mentors and allowing God’s Word to guide one’s heart is essential. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105).

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

The question of remarriage is complex, but God’s Word provides clarity and hope. Where further clarity is needed, God responds with biblical principles to help guide decisions. Whether through reconciliation or remarriage, God’s grace is sufficient to heal and restore. “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22–23).

As those in this season navigate the journey, they are called to seek God’s wisdom, trust His timing, and allow Him to guide their steps. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7).

In all decisions, trust God’s faithfulness to lead according to His perfect will.

GOING FURTHER: RESOURCES

The Meaning of Marriage by Timothy Keller

Divorce and Remarriage in the Church by David Instone-Brewer

Choosing Forgiveness by Nancy Leigh DeMoss

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible by Jay E. Adams

Boundaries in Marriage by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

God, Marriage, and Family by Andreas J. Köstenberger

The Divorce Dilemma by John MacArthur



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REMARRIAGE

IS REMARRIAGE PART OF GOD’S PLAN FOR ME?

The question of remarriage is a profoundly personal and spiritual matter that requires careful consideration of God’s Word. The Bible speaks clearly about marriage, divorce, and remarriage, offering guidance and principles to help believers navigate these complex situations. Understanding what Scripture says about remarriage, reconciliation, and the roles of those involved is essential for making decisions that honor God.

STEP ONE: UNDERSTAND GOD’S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

God designed marriage as a covenant relationship reflecting His love and faithfulness. Jesus said, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:5–6). This emphasizes the permanence and sanctity of marriage.

However, due to human sin, marriage does not always reflect God’s ideal. Divorce is permitted in certain situations, but it was not God’s original intent. Jesus explained, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8).

It is essential to recognize the seriousness of the marriage covenant before considering remarriage. Moreover, reflecting on the limits remarriage places on future decisions can help guard a current marriage. Recognizing that one’s current spouse may be their only choice for marriage serves as a deterrent to infidelity. “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous” (Hebrews 13:4).

STEP TWO: BIBLICAL GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

The Bible identifies two primary grounds for divorce: sexual immorality and abandonment by an unbelieving spouse.

1. **Sexual Immorality:** Jesus addressed this in Matthew 19:9, “And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.” Divorce is permitted in cases of sexual immorality, and the innocent spouse may be free to remarry.

For the one who committed adultery, however, remarriage is not a simple matter. Genuine repentance and a renewed commitment to living in obedience to God are crucial steps. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

2. **Abandonment by an Unbelieving Spouse:** Paul explained, “But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace” (1 Corinthians 7:15). When an unbelieving spouse abandons the marriage, the believing partner may be free to remarry.

It is important to understand that while divorce is permissible in certain situations, it is not commanded. God desires reconciliation and healing where possible. At the same time, remaining in a marriage where betrayal wounds are too difficult to overcome can lead to ongoing pain and unforgiveness. In such cases, divorce may be the wiser option to prevent further harm.

STEP THREE: RECONCILIATION—IS IT STILL POSSIBLE?

Before pursuing remarriage, reconciliation should be prayerfully considered. God’s heart is for restoration whenever possible. Paul wrote, “To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife” (1 Corinthians 7:10–11).

Reconciliation requires repentance, forgiveness, and a mutual commitment to rebuild trust. For the one who has committed adultery, genuine repentance is essential. “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8). For the innocent spouse, extending forgiveness is a reflection of God’s grace. “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

While reconciliation is ideal, it may not always be possible if one party

refuses to repent or reconcile. In such cases, pursuing remarriage must align with the biblical grounds outlined above.

STEP FOUR: SEEK PASTORAL GUIDANCE AND THE BLESSING OF THE CHURCH

Deciding to remarry is not only a personal matter but also a spiritual one that benefits from the wisdom of church leaders. Seeking the advice of a trusted pastor or spiritual mentor can provide clarity and accountability. “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14).

The church can also play a role in blessing a remarriage, affirming that it aligns with biblical principles and is entered into with prayerful discernment. Involving the church community demonstrates humility and a desire to honor God’s design for marriage. “Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act” (Psalm 37:5).

STEP FIVE: OPTIONS FOR EACH PARTY

1. For the Spouse Who Did Not Commit Adultery:

- Seek reconciliation, if possible, as this aligns with God’s heart for restoration.
- If reconciliation is not possible due to the unrepentance of the other spouse or remarriage of the other spouse, remarriage may be permissible.

2. For the Spouse Who Committed Adultery:

- Genuine repentance is essential. Seek God’s forgiveness and, if possible, the forgiveness of the spouse wronged. “Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19).
- Work toward reconciliation, demonstrating the fruits of repentance.
- If reconciliation is not possible and remarriage is being considered, it should be approached with caution, humility, and a heart fully aligned with God’s will. Seeking counseling with a pastor or spiritual mentor can provide invaluable guidance, helping to navigate the unique difficulties and emotions involved. While it may be tempting to rely on blanket statements or rigid policies for guidance, each situation often requires thoughtful consideration of its individual circumstances, seeking wisdom through prayer and biblical counsel.

STEP SIX: HONOR GOD IN ALL DECISIONS

If reconciliation is not possible and remarriage is being considered, it must be approached with prayerful discernment and a commitment to