

# **Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Lecture 20, Paul's Response to Issues of Sex and Marriage, Excursus on the Bible and Divorce, 1 Corinthians 7**

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This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is session 20, 1 Corinthians 7, Paul's Response to Issues of Sex and Marriage, Excursus on the Bible and Divorce.

Well, this is the third lecture connected to 1 Corinthians chapter 7. We've worked through the text of the chapter and some of the issues that are involved there.

And I'm going to take what I call an excursus on marriage and divorce in the Bible. So, this is a huge subject. I actually have a large section on my shelf behind me of books I've retained for a study of this issue.

Most of my library is actually in Houston, Texas, at the Lanier, L-A-N-I-E-R, Lanier Theological Library. When I retired, that's where 5,000 plus of my library went. I just have enough here in my Florida home to sustain some of the things that I'm doing.

But, excursus on marriage and divorce. I want to just give you an overview, give you some ideas, and give you a little history of interpretation so that you, as a ministry professional, can hone your understanding of what this is. Because in modern ministry, this is a huge piece that ministry leaders need to be able to deal with.

Development of biblical theology of marriage from the scriptures is the first thing to do, of course. And that takes us back to Genesis, where Adam was created. And it's an interesting narrative there.

And he names the animals, and you know, Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit, Mr. and Mrs. Elephant, Mr. and Mrs. This and That. And Adam comes to the conclusion there's no counterpart to him. The narrative tells us how God gave him Eve out of himself.

And so, that was the first couple. Marriage is viewed in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, as kinship. And it's treated in legal codes in that regard.

We'll see this in Deuteronomy just a little later. When the Bible says that two become one, it's obviously not talking literally in the sense that two physical entities become one physical entity. But it's a metaphor for the concept of kinship.

You become relatives when you get married. And that aspect of becoming relatives is also tied to the mixing of seminal fluids in the marriage situation. Furthermore, marriage is presented as an answer to the created need for relationships.

The Genesis account, I think, provides this as well. Adam was not complete without Eve. The creation that God has given us requires male and female, man and husband and wife.

And consequently, that gives us the full aspect of God's expectation for filling the earth. And that's the created pattern. Thirdly, marriage relates to the cultural mandate of Genesis.

To be fruitful and multiply, to subdue the earth, to take care of the earth. We often talk about two mandates in Scripture. One is the cultural mandate in Genesis, which is the larger mandate for humanity to be responsible for their world.

Then there's the missionary mandate, which is not absent in the Old Testament but is particularly noted at the ends of the Gospels and the beginning of Acts, where Jesus sends his disciples into the world to build his church. So, the cultural mandate is often forgotten in light of the missionary mandate. But it's there, and it's very important.

And marriage is a part of that cultural mandate. Fourth, the sanctity of sexual relations is thoroughly imaged throughout Scripture. By the way, this is page 99 in your notes on your 10th note pack.

So, the sanctity of sexual relations is thoroughly imaged throughout Scripture. Plenty of text for this. While sanctioned sex achieves procreation, it would be ludicrous to claim that that is all that it achieves.

Sex is a major part of the relationship between husband and wife, and children are a blessing and a product of that relationship, but they are not the only reason for that relationship. Fitzmeyer talks about that in his commentary. Now, he is a Roman Catholic scholar, and there will be certain nuances that will come out there.

But nonetheless, you can track that down. There was a time in the history of the church when the idea of procreation was viewed as the only purpose for marriage. I think that may have been influenced by the platonic negativism of sex and of male and female.

Five, the self-satisfaction of sexual drives, often the hidden agenda under the umbrella of relational loneliness, is not the primary criteria for decision-making. Our current culture is sex-crazed, and consequently, many times, marriage is more about sex and the physical attractiveness of individuals than anything else. At the same

time, sexual desire is a created category, and it is a part of the human being forever and in terms of this earth's history.

And so therefore, we have to account for sexual drives as a good thing because God created it that way, and it's obviously imaged throughout all of creation, not only in the human arena but also even in the animal kingdom. Marriage provides a major relational imagery that is utilized throughout scripture. Yahweh becomes Israel's wife, and Israel is a husband, so to speak, and we have this in the household codes, both in the Old and New Testaments.

It's a major category of humanity. I mean, what else is there? There's male, female. There's the whole history of creation, of procreation, and so forth.

But of course, the Fall, which is also recorded in Genesis, tells us how distorted this whole domain has become. Now, a review of passages. I've laid out all these texts for you here, and I'm not going to go through them, obviously.

But I've laid out for you the great variety of texts that exist that address marriage. I've tried to get them all. I may have missed some, but these are the major categories.

In Deuteronomy 24, I would comment for a moment and might read this to you because it's a text that comes up in the New Testament that we'll see in a little while. But in Deuteronomy 24, and verses 1 to 4, the NIV 2011, If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him, this is kind of case law because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce. This is Moses managing Israel in the wilderness and all the human issues that this poor fellow had to manage.

This would have been a major one. He gives it to her and sends it to her from his house. And if after she leaves his house, she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her, and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled.

That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord. If you sin upon the land, the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance. So, what's this about? It's not about the Bill of Divorcement.

That's another whole category that was an accommodation that Moses exercised in relation to controlling society and dealing with these problems. It was not a divine mandate. It's not a right, if you please.

But it was a cultural concession. What this text is really about is why she can't go back to her first husband. And the answer to that is in this whole thing of kinship. To do so would be incest because it would be categorized in the category of incest because she's known the man, then she knows another man, and she can't go back to the first man after that.

You'll say, well, I don't see the sense of that. No, that's irrelevant. It's case law, and it's the way that God protected the integrity of marriage in regard to the sexual relationship, the mixing of seminal fluids, and the kinship issue of marriage.

And so, it's more about protecting that than it is about some Bill of Divorcement. The Bill of Divorcement was not a divine mandate, but it was a concession Moses used in relation to adjudicating issues in society. Now, we'll come back to that when we talk about Matthew a little later.

As I've said in my notes on page 100, this passage is actually focused on case law for remarriage. The verses do not legislate divorce but treat it as a practice already known. However, nowhere delineated within canonical literature have there been at least five proposals concerning how to understand Deuteronomy 24.

And I'm not going to go into all of these with you, but I have them listed here. Some of them have merit. Views that have merit have to have merit on the basis of the exegesis of Deuteronomy, not on the basis of imposed theological systems, which often happens.

Sometimes, there's a mix where you have both theologians proposing a view and Old Testament-qualified scholars. But you must go with the Old Testament qualified scholar on the meaning of the text. You can't just use the text to support a systematic system.

That is done almost all the time, and we have quite a history of that, but we need to be very careful. The Bible first, systematic theology second, and it has got to be validated in relation to its appropriateness in relation to biblical theology. Now, in my notes, and they may be in yours as well, there's a problem with indenting and so forth in this paragraph after 2a.

But I want to read this paragraph. The bond of marriage, that is, one flesh, is not dissolved by entering into a second marriage. That's clear in Deuteronomy.

A second marriage doesn't dissolve the bond of the first marriage. It's forever. But it's not a marriage anymore in the civil organization that we have here with Moses.

But because of the kinship thing, there's a piece of it there therefore you can't go back to it. The first wife is counted as a close relative, and that relationship is

indissoluble. To remarry here, the actual prohibition of Deuteronomy 24 is about remarriage, even if the second husband is dead, which is usually a fact that causes dissolution in Romans 7, it talks about.

It's like marrying your sister and is thus viewed as incest. So, it is a legal aspect that was a part of God's controlling society. We don't know everything we might like to know about it, but we know the fact of it and what we'll have to do.

Ezra 9 and 10, Israel and intermarriage. This is a historical particularity in relation to guiding and guarding the line that was part of God's redemptive line. Therefore, there was no intermarriage involved in this.

You cannot use Ezra as proof that there should not be any intermarriage or interracial marriage. That's another stretch of taking that out of context, which has to do with Israel and the Messianic line. Malachi 2, the images of Israel as an unfaithful wife, and God hates divorce.

I am talking about, you see, the word rib, which is really rare. It's a Hebrew word that means lawsuit. If you read Hosea's book, you can really get into this reeve pattern. God has a lawsuit against his wife, that is Israel, and he's going to pursue it.

So, he uses something from real life as an analogy for the life between Yahweh and his people. Then you have a statement by Mark and Luke, which is an absolute statement, that there is no grounds for divorce and there is no remarriage. According to Mark and Luke, we'll call it idealistic, I want to use that word.

They give an idealistic statement, and in the narrative of Mark and Luke, Jesus goes back to creation and says from the beginning it was not so. In the beginning, it was an absolute setting, even though there's not a lot of text there to unpack all that. Jesus goes back and says that's the way it was in the beginning, that's the way it is now, and that's the end of the discussion.

The disciples were absolutely shocked, they couldn't understand how Jesus could be so restrictive. In fact, they say it's better a man never get married if this is the case. So, we can see that it's a very, very, very strict interpretation that Jesus gives.

Matthew, however, has become known as the exception clauses, except for porneia, for example, which is the word for fornication or any sexual sin. And those have become sort of the linchpin of the early American, particularly, view of divorce, that you couldn't get divorce unless there was death, desertion, or sexual immorality on the part of one of the partners. Then that was a grounds for divorce, and the ipso facto said if it's a grounds for divorce, it must be a grounds for remarriage.

And that's how things operated for hundreds of years in the Christian community. And until modern times, when divorce has become so flippant and so common, people have pretty much ignored any of these items. Jesus' comment about Moses and Deuteronomy in Deuteronomy 24.

There may be two pages here, but at the bottom of page 100 and the top of 101 needs to go together. Under Genesis 2:24, the institution of marriage is ideal. One man, one woman for life.

That's the implication. It's not direct; it is direct. You have man and woman as a couple that constitutes marriage and they are to procreate and so forth.

But the issue of that being the ideal for life comes because of later teaching. In Deuteronomy 24, the issue of divorce is a cultural concession. God's regulating what's happening.

He is not instituting divorce in Deuteronomy 24 but controlling what's going on without changing the culture at that point. Then Matthew comes up with chapters 5 and 19 in Matthew, where we have two exception clauses. And you'll have to, and we'll get to that a little bit later here.

But what I want you to see is this: if you take Matthew as ideal and you take a view other than some typical view, I'll explain it to you. Then, you have a consistent teaching all the way through scripture that it's one man, one woman for life.

That only death is a reason to be remarried and that other things are not grounds for divorce. As hard as that may seem, the Bible teaches the ideal. What do you do with less than the ideal? Well, you do with it like you do with any other sin.

Because, at the end of the day, divorce is a sin. It's a breakdown of human relationships. It's not the way God created us to be.

You can have all the reasons and excuses and even the problems of abuse and sexual sin and patterns of those kinds of things that happen. That's a breaking of the ideal. It's a reality in our culture, and I'll come back to how I view this and how you deal with it.

But the fact is that because of the fall and because we have an accumulated sinful society, things don't work the way God wanted them to work. The way that he laid them out to work. And as a result, we deal with a broken world.

We deal with sin every day. People sin, confess their sin, receive forgiveness, and they receive restoration. I think the Bible, however, does have a pattern of restoration that's interesting that we won't go into in much detail.

For example, with roles of leadership in the pastorals and other places once certain sexual sins have been committed, they're forever. As a result of that, you may be restored to fellowship with God in your community, but not necessarily to roles of leadership. And so, we've got Genesis, Deuteronomy, and the Gospels, particularly Matthew, as the big meta-narrative of this issue of divorce.

Romans 7 tells us that the death of a spouse is a legitimation of remarriage. So, death does dissolve the marriage. Now it didn't dissolve it back in Deuteronomy.

Why? Because the woman still had a kinship issue. So, it's a special text in that regard. But Romans makes it quite clear that death dissolves the marriage.

Then, we have 1 Corinthians 7, in which we discuss things in several different ways. The next point, and I'm not sure where C is in my outline. There are almost 250 pages.

I don't have too many problems in the outline, but a few. And there is one, but we're not going to worry about it. We're going to just look at D. An overview of the history of interpretation.

There's a book which is in the bibliography. There are quite a few pages of bibliography at the end of this section in notes number 10 that you can look up on marriage and divorce. And the things I refer to will be in there.

Heth and Wenham *Jesus on Divorce* was published, I believe it was in the 80s. It is a major contribution to bringing together the information historically from the earliest times up through the fathers and up through the modern times. But it stops at a certain point in relation to the Bible on divorce.

Now, Heth and Wenham didn't treat remarriage *per se*. They fell short of that. They didn't tell you. Now what are you doing? But they did the best job in many ways of laying out the views.

A couple of views have come since then. But by and large, you've got to start with Heth and Wenham. It's a book that's probably out of print.

I don't know if that book is in things like Lagos or not, but you need to find that volume if you're going to work on this. It's an extremely important piece. And my notes depend on it.

I follow that outline very much because it is convenient. So, the following overview endeavors to expose the student to how a variety of interpreters have organized all

of this data about divorce in the Bible. The focus of the analysis ends up with Matthew.

Because if we did not have Matthew, we wouldn't be having a conversation. The view that I actually end up proposing is that Matthew is dealing with a special sub-issue in his community. And that Matthew's exception is not an exception along the lines of sexual sin, but it is an exception along lines that can be explained in other ways.

Therefore, it fits Mark and Luke and fits everything else. That Jesus never taught anything but the ideal. One man, one woman for life until death, do your part, no exceptions.

That is the biblical meta-narrative. Now, major positions. Let me give you an overview and a flow of the positions.

This is what Heth and Wenham do. And up to the date of their publication, at least publications are done before those dates, so there might be a year or two in there. It covers the literature quite well.

And it is an indispensable tool in this discussion. I'm not going to go into this. My bibliography probably has it.

But Heth, Bill Heth, who teaches at Taylor University, a fine Christian scholar, actually changed his mind after the writing of this book. He takes what's known as the early church view in the book. He and Wenham, who are English scholars, wrote the book together.

It was a dissertation for Heth that became the book with Wenham's involvement. But later on, Heth changes his mind. You'll have to dive in to find out why he might have done that.

But at the writing of the book, my notes represent what's in there. Alright. The definition of the early church view.

Here's the definition from Heth and Wenham. The marriage bond was seen to unite both parties until the death of one of them. When a marriage partner was guilty of unchastity, usually understood to mean adultery, the other was expected to separate.

And this is what was practiced in the early church. That's why it's called the early church view. But did not have the right to remarry.



So, it was divorce. They took Matthew's exceptions to be sexual sin. And that allowed for divorce, but it did not allow for remarriage.

It wasn't to be taken in that direction. This is also claimed by the early church view in relation to the possibility of desertion that 1 Corinthians 7.15 talks about. So you've got two things going on.

Are there grounds for divorce? And are there grounds for remarriage? And remarriage is a completely separate issue that comes out of the divorce text. But we've got to look at the divorce text first. This view usually understands porneia as unchastity in violation to a marriage union.

Therefore, there is grounds for divorce, but no remarriage according to the early church view. And this was practiced. You can go back and see historical documents.

People who got divorced were treated almost like second-class Christian citizens. They were sometimes even isolated in church meetings, in certain places to sit, and so forth. And it was not a good thing.

That culture did not smile upon this or overlook it or wink at it as our current cultures do. Therefore, there are grounds for divorce but no remarriage. That's the early church position.

Now, elaboration of this. Well, the evidence is in the early fathers, and you can go on forever quoting them to uphold the early church position. I've given you a list of them here.

This is just a sample list of the ones that Heth and Wenham cite. And if you don't have Heth and Wenham, you can go look up these sources and find the early church fathers. From the earliest times, upholding this idea that divorce, but no remarriage.

Divorce was only for sexual sin and desertion. So that's the early church view. Pretty straightforward.

And it was held tenaciously. And in those hundreds and hundreds of years, probably 13 to 1400 years, that was the dominant Orthodox view until the time of Erasmus, who is going to be bringing us the next variation.

Erasmus' view. John Murray, who was a part of Westminster Seminary, Princeton, and Westminster Seminary, has a volume on this, and he is probably, I would say, the best continual compendium of the Erasmian view. There are others who present this.

There's a lot of it in my bibliography. There are journal articles of hundreds of pages that cover this as well. The definition of the Erasmian view.

We call it Erasmian because Erasmus, a Roman Catholic humanitarian scholar, got tired of the early church view and the harshness of the Roman church in this domain. And he squeaked it and we've come to call it the Erasmian view. Erasmus says that sexual infidelity, that is Matthew 5 and 19, and desertion of a spouse provide grounds for divorce.

Now, that's still early church. But here comes the wrinkle. And the right to remarry is implied.

So, he takes it that the right to remarry is an implication of teaching. The Roman Catholic Church did not accept that. But he was pushing against his own traditions and his own situation in this Renaissance humanitarian era in which Erasmus functioned.

He was not happy with a lot of Romanism. And as a result of that, he was at cross purposes with them, even though, for some reason, he was not excommunicated that I know of, nor was he killed. So that's the definition.

What's the elaboration? Well, here it is on page 103. The early church view held sway until the 16th century. One exception is Ambroiaester, who wrote in the 4th century, and Heth and Wenham cite that.

And I'm sure there are some others as you can imagine. But the majority sort of wins the day in this history of the church. And the majority certainly were with the early church.

But Erasmus, who spanned 1466 to 1536, shakes up the situation. Erasmus, as I've given you here on page 103, was an enlightened humanist and Christian pragmatist who was also known to dislike Roman Catholic authoritarianism. And you can surface that very easily in reading about Erasmus.

He sought to synthesize canon law, which would have been the early church view in this regard, and the principles of the Enlightenment, where he viewed the prevailing view of no divorce or remarriage as cruel and, on that basis, set out to revise it. Out of this he laid down two new interpretive principles for severe marriage problems. Number one, it should be permissible to dissolve certain marriages, not fortuitously, which is what happens today, but for very serious reasons, by the ecclesiastical authorities or recognized judges.

So, there should be an avenue to dissolve the relationship. Two, to give the innocent party the freedom to marry again is paramount to Erasmus. In short, he viewed charity as more important than canon law, that's Roman canon law, and endeavored to argue such from God's gracious treatment of mankind in other domains.

So, implicationally, he has a creative construct that became known as the Erasmian view. J. Barton Payne, an evangelical scholar who's deceased, actually, I think it might have been his dissertation, but he has a major book on Erasmus. He observed, quote, Erasmus reveals himself not only as a historian but also as something of an ethical relativist and contextualist who thinks that love, which is the substance of the law of nature and the law of scripture, is the only ultimate guide to human behavior, not human historically conditioned laws.

So, he was in big-time conflict with his Roman traditions. The Protestant reformers actually picked up with Erasmus, and their exegesis of the divorce text seems to follow the Erasmian thinking. Historical situation, it's important to view this period on its own, which means a situation in life.

What was it like in the late 1400s and early to mid 1500s? The struggle with the Roman Catholic Church conditioned the views of Erasmus, who stayed in the church as a naughty son, and also Luther, who departed from the church, as well as many other major reformational leaders who in some way or another had touched the Roman Church, but now were leading in new directions. At the Council of Trent in 1563, this would have been after the death of Erasmus. The views of the reformers, which reflected Erasmus of 50 years prior, were condemned by the Roman Church, but that didn't get rid of them. The reformation brought in Erasmus' views, opening up remarriage particularly, and to some extent, the justification of divorce, because Erasmus went on beyond sex and desertion into some other categories as well.

Luther adopted immorality and desertion as grounds and allowed remarriage. Calvin also, I don't have a lot here on Calvin, but look at 4E, the tradition of Calvin is in the Westminster Confession. John Milton of the 1600s published his work called the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.

in 1643. One month after the Westminster Assembly convened, his statements were for radical reform away from strict views. As Erasmus sought to synthesize Romanism with the Enlightenment, Milton sought to synthesize the Reformation with Humanism.

The Assembly, however, stayed with the Calvin-Beza theology that was very much Erasmian. Now, you will have to research this out to get further information about how Erasmus related to this. I'll give you a little bit of how it ended up developing from Erasmus to the Reformers and then, out of Calvinism, moved into the United States, for example, in 4D.

This is chapter 4 in Heth and Wynnum. So, once again, if you can get hold of that volume, you're going to be able to have a great expansion of this outline that I'm giving you. Heth and Wynnum discuss three major variations.

1. Adultery and desertion are grounds for divorce and, therefore, for remarriage. That's the position of John Murray, who is a major Calvinist figure in not-too-distant past history, from Princeton to Westminster Seminary, so a major factor. And, by the way, John Murray and Murray's views on ethics and divorce are major in terms of Baptist traditions and Bible Church traditions in America.

Most of the Protestant traditions, and of course Baptists and Bible Church don't view themselves as Protestants, but a ton of the Protestant tradition in America is the Erasmian view. And that was revised and forwarded by the Reformers, so whatever theological persuasion they might be of, this Erasmian view is basically what most of us grew up with. Whatever church we were in, I didn't grow up in church, I was saved later in my life, but the fact is it's a dominant view.

2E. Pornea intends a wide range of sins so grounds can be broadened, and that could go into all kinds of avenues. So, you can see that the basic shell of sexual sin desertion is being unpacked through implications, probably good biblical theology implications, is being expanded, and that's where you have to make decisions about just how far can you go with this.

And then 3. Matthaean redaction introduced the exception clauses, which were not original with Jesus, thus showing a pragmatic development within the church. In other words, there are other variations, but it always goes back to Matthew because without Matthew, there is no conversation, and there is no issue. Matthew is the only one who gives that crack in the armor in terms of grounds for divorce and, therefore, for remarriage.

So, this is a large creative construct, but very implicational in its aspects. Other issues on text. A key issue with the Erasmian tradition is the justification of the innocent party to remarry.

Now, I don't know about you; I'm probably a generation beyond most of you who listen to these lectures, and my ministry has, for ordination, spanned from 67 to now, so I have 50 years invested in Christian ministry. And except for probably the last 10 to 15 of those years, maybe 20, this Erasmian variation was the assumption in Christian circles, even conservative Christian circles. Because of divorce, when I was a pastor in the 60s and 70s, when I was pastoring mostly when I was in school, some not in school, most church constitutions laid out this issue of divorce and laid it out exactly as Erasmus did it and as John Murray, John Murray was a major hero, regardless of whether they even knew where it came from, they laid it out that way.

And there wasn't any discussion about it. To give you an illustration of that, I pastored a rural church of a couple hundred people or so, and I had a church board

that had developed the church's constitution, which had a statement on divorce. When they wrote that statement, virtually nobody in that church was divorced.

Well, decades passed, and these board members got older. I married some of their children, and some of those children ended up getting divorced from these board members. They were beside themselves because now they were in a family tension about what to do with their children when they got divorced. And so, in a board meeting one day, they said to me, we want you to rewrite our constitution along on this issue of divorce and remarriage.

And I told them that I would not do that, that I would help them do it. You know, pastors are only short-lived. Churches go on and on.

So I helped them to walk through and understand where they were, where they've been, and where they're going to go. To be frank, I don't remember the outcome of that. I was only there for two or three years because I was in school and moved on to a teaching position.

And so, consequently, I don't remember exactly how they finished all that. But at least I wanted them to make that decision and to struggle with it because it was, at the end of the day, their church. And that was a bit of a shocker.

But it was good for them to do that. Now, John Milton's statements were pretty radical for the Westminster divines. Radical reform away from strict views.

As Erasmus sought to synthesize Romanism with the Enlightenment, Milton sought to synthesize the Reformation with humanism. The Assembly, however, stayed with the Calvin-Beza theology. Now, we talked about the modern development of the Erasmian view.

And that is probably what many of you have assumed is the Erasmian reformed, revised sort of position. And then expanded through the stress and tensions of modern society. A key issue with the Erasmian tradition is this justification of the innocent party to remarry.

Quote from Heth and Wenham again: There are two pillars that support the superstructure of the Erasmian view today. That was as recent as the 1980s. The first is the belief that the divorce which Jesus spoke about was the mosaic, disillusioned divorce in Deuteronomy 24.

That was an assumption, of course. You can see that they're misusing Deuteronomy 24 in this regard. And the second is the understanding that the exception clause qualifies the entire prothesis.

That's the beginning statement. This has to do with if clauses of Matthew 19:9. Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, thus permitting both divorce and remarriage. So, there was an exegetical piece in language that was used to justify remarriage.

Marriage of the innocent party. Innocent party. There's a can of worms.

In the case of the unchastity. The second argument appears to replace the exegetical basis for remarriage, which the reformers found in legal fiction. You might want to highlight that.

That actually comes out of the Roman church. Comes through the reformers. The legal fiction that the adulterer should be considered dead.

So, they forensically saw the non-innocent party as dead. Therefore, that allowed the dissolution of the marriage and, therefore, remarriage. So, you can see how, historically, all of this came about.

Well, that's the Erasmian view. One that you need to become very familiar with. And you need to do your homework.

But you can reduce how much homework you have to do by getting a hold of Heth and Wenham and starting there. Then upgrading yourself after it. Let me say something here.

In the introduction, I talked about the three R's of learning. Reading, reading, reading. And you could add research, research, research.

This may come as a shock. But if you're going to be a sound leader in any controversial issue that needs to be dealt with in your ministry context, you need to surface and read somewhere in the range of a couple of thousand pages of information so that you can sift through the issue. You can outline the issue.

You can see the pros and cons of the various views that are internal to the issue. You can understand the history of interpretation. You can see where communities of good interpreters fall in relation to that.

Now, that may not be good news for you, particularly in the American culture, where we have a culture of non-research reading in the church. This may not be good news for you.

And I'm sorry for that, but I'm certainly not going to apologize. You need to man up or woman up and get busy and do your homework and gain understanding so that out of a pool of understanding you can help people think through issues. You can't

do that by reading one book and just portraying it to people, which is the lazy cop-out way that often happens.

You have got to do a broad-based research project. I'm not giving you a framework for that in this regard. I'm giving you a bibliography that you can surface with very little work.

It may be strange, and it may take you a while to learn to work in that regard but do it. Do your homework, and you'll be able to help people. Don't do your homework, and you'll end up manipulating them along the lines of your own ignorance.

I'm sorry, that's just the case. This category view, the unlawful marriage view, this category focuses on specialized meanings of porneia. We can actually have three views even though there's probably six or seven views of Matthew.

Three views. The early church, that it was a sexual grounds for divorce but not for remarriage. The Erasmus view, sexual grounds for divorce but you could also remarry.

Third category, specialized interpretive views of Matthew's passages in chapters 5 and 19. Specialized views of the exception clause so that they are not a simple sexual exception but there's something intrinsic to Matthew's community. Actually, this is where the most recent and elaborate research has been done. Why is it that Matthew has it and Mark and Luke do not? Mark and Luke speak in the absolute.

Mark and Luke speak the ideal and then Matthew throws a wrench into the machinery. Why? And the assumption is and it's I think a good assumption that Matthew was dealing with an in-house issue that was not a broad generalistic exception but was a more specified interpretive issue and there are proposals for that. Here they are.

Page 105 and following. There's the rabbinic view. And I've given you bibliography for this.

That understands pornea in Matthew to be the equivalent of the Hebrew zanot, which in the context of the divorce sayings refers to illegitimate marriages within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. I'm sorry, I'm not really great on that one and affinity found in Leviticus. This has to do with the illegal mixing of fluids and so forth and illegal marriage and incest, and so forth. Even Ryrie, who's certainly not in the same guild as all of these other writers, holds this view.

So that should make some of you feel comfortable. So, nonetheless, we call it the rabbinic view. Fitzmeyer brings this one out the most.

Calling it rabbinic is a little bit generous because Fitzmeyer is going to show you that it comes from the Qumran scrolls, so the rabbinics are quite late. The rabbinic tradition that is as we know it, didn't start until after the destruction of the temple in 70, and the Mishnah and the Talmud weren't produced until the 4th to 5th centuries as far as writing is concerned. People who were called rabbis before that time were revered teachers but there's a difference between being Halal and Shammai and so forth that later show up in rabbinic traditions and what we call rabbinic traditions that are post-70 AD after the destruction of the temple.

If you want to know about that David Instone-Brewer who actually wrote on divorce and is in the bibliography also is doing a multi-volume set on the Mishnah. You can find that from Erdman's. In volume 1 you should read his introduction.

If you have been tainted by ill-informed teaching about the rabbis by certain individuals out of the Grand Rapids area, you need to do your homework in David in Stone Brewer, who is becoming the authority. He's at Tyndale House connected to Cambridge University on the Mishnah and the rabbinic traditions and he is the one from whom I use the assertion that there was no rabbinic tradition as we know it from the Mishnah and the Talmud prior to 70 AD. Now you'll have to wonder about that.

You find the word rabbi, but rabbi means teacher, and the New Testament doesn't mean rabbinic tradition. That is, the Mishnah and the Talmud. There could have been oral pieces of that in the 1st century but you can't make a line of connection from the 4th and 5th century written documents back to the 1st century. That is a whole discipline PhD domain in its own to try to figure that stuff out.

You can't impose it by assumption, which has happened in certain settings of people who think they know something about Jewish and rabbinic scholarship. Now, Fitzmeyer, on page 105, quotes in this text that in the Damascus document, we have a clear instance of marriage with degrees of kinship. That's that word consignment. I'm sorry I'm not doing that very well, but I can say kinship prescribed by Leviticus 18 being labeled as Zunut. In the Old Testament Zunut is used both of harlotry and of idolatrous infidelity.

In the Septuagint it is translated by Pornea. Now there's the connection. Whatever one might want to say about the nuances of the word Zunut in the Old Testament, it is clear that among the Jews who produced the Damascus Document, the word had taken on further specific nuances so that polygamy, divorce, and remarriage within forbidden degrees of kinship could be referred to by the Hebrew Zunut.

Thus, in the Damascus Document, we have the missing link evidence for a specific understanding of Zunut as a term for marriage within forbidden degrees of kinship or for incestuous marriage going back to Deuteronomy 24. This is a specific



understanding that is found among the Palestinian Jews of the first century. Now he's talking about that being the explanation for Matthew 5 and 19.

There's the article the Matthaean divorce text that Fitzmeyer writes on. Fitzmeyer is also the individual who wrote the anchor Bible commentary on 1st Corinthians. Therefore, this rabbinic view has become a major academic view in relation to the Matthaean divorce text.

The early church view is not very popular among scholars. The Erasmian view even its Reformation revision is not really that popular among the highest level of academic scholarship. But this forbidden aspect of kinship view has become quite the academic view.

There are variations of this. In fact, I think that Rari really was in the intermarriage view because he was not really informed about all of the Quran material and the rabbinic view. But he falls into the same category even though he might have been a variation.

Here Pornea is viewed as referring to intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles this intermarriage view which are prohibited by law. So, they would say that Matthew's exception was not a general sexual exception but was an exception in regard to this issue of illegitimate intermarriage. And the rabbinic view would say that it's an exception to this in-house problem with kinship remarriage.

All right. So that's a specialized view. Another specialized view is what's known as the Betrothal view.

This is very popular among many. The best book on that is by Isaacson, Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple. This view also views Pornea as a specialized reference, not as a general reference.

It is argued that Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience who was familiar with the custom and law of divorce in the case of a betrothed woman who was found to be sexually unfaithful and that Pornea would have been a term that they recognized specifically in reference to sexual sin during the betrothal period and therefore causing divorce. We could even ask about Mary and Joseph, and Joseph was going to put her away, which could come into that narrative, but he didn't do so. The betrothal period was viewed as marriage, and the law treated it as such, but sexual consummation did not occur until after the actual marriage ceremony.

The major problem is that severe restriction on the term Pornea is hard to sustain for that restricted view and I've cited Matthew 1 and could even have played in the Mary and Joseph narrative there. But the betrothal view is a major view. The Grace Brethren denomination held the betrothal view and may still hold it, I don't know.

In fact, Grace Theological Seminary, in its earlier history, was a major seminary among evangelicals. In its earliest catalog, it said that divorced people need not apply for their MDiv program because their MDiv program was for ordination, and they viewed divorce as a disqualification for ordination. Now, they changed that. I was on the faculty there for 10 years, and I was there nearly 20 years as a student and as a faculty member; I very intimately understand that situation that was taken out of the catalog at a very I was there for 10 years.

His basic approach is to know where the New Testament continues, Old Testament traditions, influenced by modern Judaism in the first century as grounds for divorce or remarriage. So, basically, Instone-Brewer is continuing a Second Temple Jewish understanding of divorce and remarriage as the acceptable way to go. I have not exhausted Instone-Brewer.

That came out about the time I was phasing out of these things, and I haven't followed up, so I'm not going to say a lot about Enstone Brewer other than that he's a fine scholar. But what little I have looked, I'm going to stick with the Fitzmeyer view of Zanut rather than going with Instone-Brewer. Instone-Brewer's view is convenient in one sense because it opens the door to divorce in a greater way than most of the other views.

A summary evaluation of the views, page 107. I want to revise that. 1A Early Church, 2A Erasmian, 3A All Other Views.

So, you can see the trifold division. So 1A, top of page 107, you have to supply 1A Early Church, change 1A to 2A, the Erasmian view, change 2A to 3A, All of the Other Views. So I said there are basically three choices.

You take the Early Church view, you take the Erasmian view, or you take the third category out of which you have five or six views, but all of them are specialized. They are not general sexual sin exceptions. They're all specialized.

You choose one of those, and Matthew ends up being the same as Mark and Luke, that Matthew didn't give a generalized exception. But Matthew is speaking about something in his own community for whatever reason, and at the end of the day, all divorce texts in the Bible agree that there is no divorce and there is no remarriage. I call that the ideal.

Please catch that. The ideal. The Bible teaches, in my mind, the ideal about this issue.

It's a very volatile issue of divorce and remarriage. There are a lot of metaphors that are fixed on this, all the way through Scripture in the Old and New Testament. And the Bible never gave us a case law set up for dealing with divorce and remarriage.

It gave us the ideal, and we're going to have to deal with it after that. In other words, you've got the ideal. The ideal isn't very common in a broken world, but we are taught about how to deal with a broken world.

We deal with a broken world along the lines of recognition of truth, repentance when the truth is deviated from, and a process of restoration, actually, a process of forgiveness, which leads to a process of restoration. That restoration is done along the lines of understanding that that particular sin has ramifications beyond simple restoration. And that has implications in relation to ministry positions and so forth.

Alright, so the meter's view, 9a. On this issue, I think the Bible teaches the ideal. When Jesus is confronted in Mark and Luke, he goes back to Genesis and says, from the beginning, it was not so.

One man, one woman, that's it. He doesn't elaborate. Okay? That's unfortunate for us, but that's the way it is.

When Paul was confronted with it in 1 Corinthians 7, it was an absolutely wonderful place to bring in an Erasmian idea, or any idea for that matter, and open up the door. Paul never did it. He used the Dominical tradition in the strictest fashion out of Mark and out of Luke.

He never used Matthew. That's an argument from silence, yes, but it's a silence that is deafening to me. He understood Jesus to be teaching the ideal, and that's what Paul sticks with in 1 Corinthians 7. But there are these other views that most of them, some of them wouldn't even exist today, and they're not pursued very much because culture has trumped the Bible in terms of a lot of teaching in the practical sense of the word, and so consequently nobody worries too much about it.

We just do what we do. That's an unfortunate situation, but that's where we are. The ideal.

Now, let me ask you a question. All right, I hold the ideal. One man, one woman, four life, only death dissolves that union.

There is no remarriage. That's the ideal. Now, what do you do? Now listen carefully.

What do you do with a less than ideal world? Well, the answer is you deal with it. Recognition of sin, seeking forgiveness of sin, restoration that's clearly delineated and not willy-nilly nor generous in certain areas, such as leadership areas. Sin is sin, and this sin is particularly disqualifying, and that's a hard truth, but that's not acceptable in American culture.

In American culture, ministry leaders who have sexual sins want to be restored after about a month or two. Maybe they'll be real generous and go six months to a year, and then they want to be right back where they were with their big churches, their big budgets, their high income and be completely exonerated. I don't think the Bible views it that way.

Sorry. That may seem to be harsh, but I find the Bible to be more restrictive in this particular domain. Pay your dues.

You can be restored to full fellowship with Jesus, and you can be restored to fellowship with your congregation, but that special domain of leadership is not easily brought back into view. In fact, I don't think that the pastorals recognize it. Our current culture does.

We go on with our creative constructs, but I think it'd be smarter, if that's your case, to bite the bullet and be fully restored in forgiveness, but give up being that leader that maybe you once were. Now, you won't like that, and it's not easy, and you'll come up with things like, well, God's called me to do this, and so, therefore, I'm going to ignore the Bible and do what I want to do and do what some people tell me I can do. Well, go on.

I'm not your mother. I'm not your keeper, but you have to deal with this realistically. I know one scholar, a major scholar whose name I will not mention, who fell into this situation, and his track record after it is a major stepping out of a role of leadership.

He hasn't stepped out. He was a teacher more than a pastor, even though he was a minister. He's continued on with academic publishers and some other things, doing great work.

We even tried to get him as an adjunct, good or bad, at a school that I taught because he was a fine man, and he had bitten the bullet of his failure. We thought adequately that he could at least teach, but he wouldn't do it because he held the view of the seriousness of that failure. He restored his family. He moved into a small community and has lived a consistent Christian life, to my knowledge, and yet continued his work as a scholar, but in isolation.

That's tough. That's the only consistent person that I know. Most of the ones we see are high-profile pastors who justify the sin and then are right back within a year into their ministry leadership roles.

Well, they'll have to answer for that. I'm just telling you what I think the Bible says. Now, the issue of remarriage.

I can't spend as much time here. I want to recommend a book to you. There are two of them.

The only book on the divorce question that I know that actually engages the remarriage question is Andrew Kornis. It's in England. I think he's Anglican, but he has a good section on remarriage.

It's in the bibliography, and it's in my notes here on page 107 in the middle. Andrew Kornis, you need to read that. Furthermore, Mark Strauss was the editor of a counterpoint book with Zondervan, a views book on remarriage after divorce, and in there, you'll get about four views or so from scholars and denominational perspectives on what this is.

Now, I suggest you do your homework first on the divorce text thoroughly before you get into the remarriage question so that you'll be ready to be able to think of where these people are coming from because they're not going to give you all the lines of reason. They're going to give you a limited line of reason, and then they're going to move on. For you to make your best decisions and to live with it, you need to do that study first before you get to the remarriage.

In Genesis, cleave means one flesh's kinship, as we've talked about. What is the bond of marriage? The tracing out of the significance of one flesh indicates that the Old Testament viewed marriage as an act that caused two people to become related. This is noted in how kinship laws, in Leviticus and Deuteronomy particularly, are applied to married people.

As the principle of blood relations creates a bond which, by definition, cannot be broken, marriage also creates an indissoluble bond that is only dissolved by death. That's the forensic teaching of Scripture. Trace it out.

Two, the issue of desolubility. Now we get to the implicational and creative constructs. The only way to circumvent the clear statements of Jesus that remarriage after divorce is adultery, and that's another question about how long it is and what that means.

I'm going to let you follow up on that, the literature is there. The Reformers have used the principle of so-called legal fiction. If there's grounds for divorce, then that includes remarriage, and that means that the partner is considered dead.

That's the fiction. They're not dead, but they're considered dead. So, both Romanism and the Reformers and most traditions have a legal fiction.

A sexually unfaithful partner is viewed as legally dead, but that won't even work these days because there are a lot of very difficult situations with abuse and so forth

and so on. The American courts, for example, don't deal with anything about divorce today except incompatibility. They won't make judgments, and there is no such thing as an innocent party in the legality of divorce.

There may be compelling reasons to think about that as people and as Christians, but the fact is the courts aren't going to recognize it. As the principle of blood relations creates a bond which, by definition, cannot be broken, marriage also creates an indissoluble bond that is only dissolved by death. So, legal fiction is necessary.

That was the statement at the end of the number one paragraph. Legal fiction. Murray assumes that a valid divorce is dissolution.

So, there's the assumption. There's the implication. There's the creative construct.

A number of other explanations exist among Erasmus interpreters since they all recognize the need to address the issue of dissolvability. Is remarriage addressed by key text? The placement of the exception phrases, Matthew 19 particularly, but Matthew 5 as well, when studied in light of normal grammatical patterns in Matthew and the New Testament, argues that it applies to put away what precedes it and not to marry that follows. So grammatically, it's not a good argument to try to take it with remarriage but to take it with divorce.

This reading correlates with Mark and Luke, namely, remarriage is always viewed as adultery. I'm talking about the forensic nature of this. I'm not going to say that adultery is forever.

I think there are ways of dealing with that implicational because the ideal actually gives me more freedom to deal with problems than any of the other views because sin breaks the ideal, and you have to deal with it. And God knows that, and the Bible knows that. It deals with every other sin, but this one is so special because of the kinship question and because of so many metaphors built upon it that it becomes difficult to deal with.

This opinion is a forensic necessity that does not necessarily imply perpetual adultery: application, philosophy, and biblical data. You have to start by getting your arms around the divorce text.

That's a lot of reading and research. Thankfully, it's real focused. It's focused into Matthew.

It's focused into 1 Corinthians 7, the issue of desertion. You can find enough articles to choke a horse on this. So go, get them, find them.

In a computer age, they're even easier to surface. I could sit here all day long on my computer through the school library that I used to go to and print off articles. I have shelves of this stuff.

I'll never get to it. I'll be dead before I get to it. It's your job.

The eternal cultural problem is whether we will accept God's view of life or whether we will endeavor to impose our own view. Man, we can rationalize this out the gazoo. I can rationalize it better than you can.

You can rationalize it. We all do it because we don't like it. We'll relegate the Bible to a past document and do all kinds of things.

The only legitimate rationalization is, in my mind, when you take the view like I do, that the Bible teaches the ideal, your rationalization now becomes legitimate because we're constantly dealing with sin. We're dealing with a less-than-ideal world, and we have to come up with structures that are reasonable. We have to admit that we're dealing with sin.

Sin is a violation of the revealed will of God. And the revealed will of God about this question is pretty clear in my mind. But the ideal and it's the fact that a fall theology deals with that, actually opens up the vistas of my dealing with it immensely more than taking any of the first views of the early church or the Erasmian view of any variation or even its broad extensions in our current culture.

I can create structures to address all of these issues from implicational and creative constructs, but the fact is it's all a violation of the created intention in the ideal. We need to proceed on the basis of a holistic biblical philosophy. How has God dealt with a sinful society? Even Deuteronomy 24 gives us an insight into that.

God does deal with a sinful society. He didn't dictate Deuteronomy 24 divorce. He dictated no incest through Moses.

Implications of 1 Corinthians 6, such were some of you. Paul's Gentile mission and the world he engaged, this is fascinating. When Paul went out and founded churches, he had to appoint leaders, and this could be argued against me in certain ways, and this gets complicated because you've got to talk about pre-Christian, post-Christian, and on and on it goes.

Do you think that Paul was able to appoint people in those churches to leadership who had not been participants in sexual sin? Absolutely not. It was impossible. We've seen Roman Corinth.

We've seen the banquets. We've seen the temples. So, you think about that for a while and unpack it.

That's a part of the implicational creative construct domain. Fourth, is there inspired development within the New Testament text? That's another question I haven't talked to you about much and won't, but there are some implications there that will be brought up in the literature. Does Paul develop beyond Jesus? That's another question.

Two, how do you answer those who ask if any remarriage is valid? Do you understand the biblical view of marriage and divorce? If you don't understand that, you can't understand the question. You can't deal with the question. See, this is ministry, leadership, and hard work.

This isn't for the fainthearted. Go sell used cars. Have you responded to that understanding? Remaining as you are is at least one principle, assuming certain criteria and moral stipulations that will be brought into this question.

The question that has to do with pre- and post-conversion and so forth. How do we account for the human desires God created in us? The desire for relationships. It's good for a man not to be alone.

And the broken marriages and the desire for sex, call it companionship, and it is. That's part of the creative desire, but I'm afraid in our earlier years, and maybe even later years, it's all about sex. And it's such a strong draw.

Sexual desire is a creative category. God created it. Now, we have to deal with it.

2a. Engage in a biblical worldview. Rebuild your relationship with God.

Increase your understanding of his word. Proceed slowly with careful, critical reflection about new relationships. And be sure you've done adequate homework.

And that is not going to be easy for anybody, even if you're a trained person in biblical studies, even if you can read articles that deal with languages and understand them, regardless of your level of capacity in languages.

Or if you have no languages, there's plenty for you to read, and you can always read above yourself. It's a big job. But we cannot abrogate our responsibility to deal with it in our world.

Our world has passed us by. It has trampled the opportunity to talk about biblical teaching to a great extent on the basis of how I feel. It's not a fun thing to get into this domain.



But the purity of the church requires it. And our own personal purity requires it. It'll wake you up to study this material.

Well, I've tried to give you a paradigm and a big picture. But most of all, I've tried to give you resources. I've told you where to start.

You can see the names through my outline here. Those would be places to start. But Heth and Wenham will give you the big picture up to a certain point.

Then you've got to branch out from there. There is a ton of material on this question. It's not going to be easy.

It's going to take you a while. If you're a pastor, take a sabbatical from your church to study. Plan it ahead of time so you don't waste time.

You're going to have to get yourself isolated. Maybe do a lot of homework before you get the chance to do it in a focused way. At the end of the day, you've got to make some decisions.

But here's the material to do it with. It'll lead you to do that. It doesn't make them for you, per se.

But it gives you the framework from which you can make your own. Well, I wish you well. I wish you the motivation and the opportunity to do the kind of work that's necessary to be a good Christian leader, regardless of what level you're at.

Whether you're a layperson teaching a Sunday school, a church staff person, a senior pastor, an elder, a deacon, or just a Christian who really wants to be informed, do your homework. There are no shortcuts to understanding God's word.

Have as good a day as you can.

This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is session 20, 1 Corinthians 7, Paul's Response to Issues of Sex and Marriage, Excursus on the Bible and Divorce.