

# Who Can Lawfully Divorce and Remarry?

## What is Fornication?

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

### ➤ Intro:

- **it seems that more and more Christians are divorcing than ever before**
  - many are getting remarried for all sorts of reasons, claiming they have authority from God
- **this lesson:** reminds us of God's law concerning divorce, remarriage, and fornication
  - **Dawn:** we need this lessons, because more and more school age Christian girls are behaving like unbelievers, and purposely having babies out of wedlock

### ➤ Not divorce and remarry except for fornication

- **Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:39** marriage, two people bound together by the law of God, till death
  - if one of the 2 dies, they are released by the law, the one who remains alive may remarry
  - impresses upon us the importance of choosing a spouse
- - **Matt. 5:31-32** not divorce and remarry except for unchastity (fornication, sexual immorality)
  - Greek: *porneia*, unlawful sexual intercourse – more info later
  - if you divorce for a reason other than fornication, and marry another person, it's adultery
  - if you marry a person who divorced his spouse for a reason other than fornication, it's adultery
- - **Matt. 19:3-6, 7-9** only God can lawfully separate married people while both parties are living, sexual immorality (fornication) the only reason he does
  - Greek: *porneia*, unlawful sexual intercourse – more info later
- - **1 Cor. 7:10-11** if divorce for a reason other than fornication, remain unmarried or be reconciled
- **illus.: this is not hard to understand**
  - man, studied in Thomasville, been coming to church with us and worked for one of the brethren, let him read the passages, didn't have to explain it, he said, "I'm not doing that!"
  - this is easy to understand, if we want to understand it – can't lawfully divorce and remarry except for fornication

➤ **Fornication (*porneia*) is unlawful sexual intercourse**

- **importance of understanding the meaning of “fornication”**
  - **know the terms** of the covenant we’re entering into upon marriage
  - **not sin by divorcing for what we think is fornication**, and it’s not
- **fornication is unlawful sexual intercourse**
  - **"Fornication"** denotes **"illicit sexual intercourse"** (Vine's).
  - **"Intercourse"** - ask audience to refer to Webster’s dictionary - not reviewed during lesson
    - denotes "physical sexual contact between individuals that involves the genitalia of at least one person" (Webster)
  - **fornication is all sexual intercourse, except for intercourse between two lawfully married people**
- **fornication includes:**
  - **adultery:** sexual intercourse with someone who is married to another person
  - **incest, bestiality, pedophilia**
  - **some forms of dancing** that is popular in middle schools and high schools

➤ - **fornication is a sin**

- **1 Cor. 6:9-10** fornicators will not be saved, unless repent and correct their lives

➤ - **sexual sins that are not fornication, are sexual uncleanness and licentiousness (sensuality)**

- **2 Cor. 12:21** impurity (uncleanness), **immorality** (fornication, *porneia*), **licentiousness** (sensuality)
  - **sexual sins that are not fornication are impurity and licentiousness**
  - **cannot lawfully divorce and marry another for sexual sins that are not fornication**
- **illus.: lust** (strong desire to sin)
  - **lust is a sin, but it’s not fornication**
  - **we cannot divorce** a spouse and lawfully marry another person because they lusted in the past

➤ **A person in an unlawful marriage must repent**

- **Lk. 13:3, 5** **repent or perish**, like everyone else who is living in sin
  - **repentance requires a change** so not longer participating in sin
  - **God has not made an exception for unlawful marriages**

- **illus.:**

- **person living in a stolen house** would have to move, if he repented
- **a person driving a stolen car** would have to give it back, if he repented
- **a person living in adultery** would have to stop the adultery, if he repented
- **a person in an unlawful marriage (adultery)** would have to get out of it, if he repented

➤ - **illus.: Israelites and their unlawful marriages when returning from Babylonian captivity**

- **Ezra 9:1-2; 10:1-3, 19, 44; Neh. 10:28-29** **separation from unlawfully married spouses**
  - **men were in immoral marriages, repentance required them to put away the wives they were unlawfully married to – sometimes children involved**

- **we must repent to be saved, which includes putting away a spouse we’re unlawfully married to**

➤ **Does baptism turn an unlawful marriage into a lawful marriage?**

- **illus. broader questions: Does baptism turn an unlawful relationship into a lawful relationship?**

- does baptism make a stolen car, not stolen – no
- does baptism make a gay marriage, not gay – no
- does baptism make adultery, not adultery – no

- **Acts 17:30** repentance in required, no exception for adultery or unlawful marriages

- **Acts 2:38** repentance precedes baptism – change of heart resulting in change of action
- **must separate from unlawful spouse before baptized**
  - can't be baptized, and go home to live with unlawful spouse

➤ - **1 Cor. 7:17-20, 21-24** Paul does not condone staying in unlawful marriages after baptism

- **error: some people teach that Paul teaches that it's okay to stay in an unlawful marriage** (adultery) because of Paul's teaching – remain in that condition in which he was called

- **if that were true:** homosexual relationships, gay marriages, living in stolen houses, driving stolen cars would be lawful

➤ - **absurd position: 1 Cor. 6:9-11** they had repented, were not longer. . . .

- **truth: Paul is addressing lawful relationships**, not unlawful relationships (circumcised, uncircumcised, slave, free)

- **application:** if you are in a lawful relationship when you become a Christian, you can stay in it, you don't have to separate from a spouse who isn't a Christian (vs. 12-16)

- **baptism does not turn an unlawful marriage into a lawful marriage**

- **we must repent of all sin to be saved**, including unlawful marriage (adultery)

**Summary / Inv.**

- **marriage: two people bound together by the law of God, till death**

- **Who can be lawfully married?**

- one who has never been married
- one who divorced his spouse for fornication (*porneia*)

- **Who can lawfully divorce and remarry?**

- one who divorces his spouse for fornication (*porneia*)

- **What must a person do who is in an unlawful marriage?**

- repent, put away his unlawful spouse

- **inv.:** repent, obey