

## An Outline of Biblical Teaching on Divorce

<p>1. God's ideal will is the lifelong union of man and wife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This is especially for the sake of the children and stability in society.</i></li> </ul>
<p>2. But OT Law allows divorce as a concession to human weakness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Moses allowed men to write a certificate of divorce</i></li> <li>• <i>Only men in that society could take divorce proceedings</i></li> <li>• <i>(Mark 10:2-5; Deut 24:1; Isa 50:1; Jer 3:8; Matt 1:19)</i></li> </ul>
<p>3. In NT times men could divorce their wives for trivial reasons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>for burning food</i></li> <li>• <i>for putting too much salt in food</i></li> <li>• <i>for going out without a head covering</i></li> <li>• <i>for talking to a man in the street</i></li> <li>• <i>for speaking disrespectfully of her in laws</i></li> <li>• <i>for being troublesome or quarrelling</i></li> </ul>
<p>4. Jesus, especially concerned for divorced women who were destitute financially tightened this up to allows divorce if one partner is sexually immoral.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>this means any sort of sexual misdemeanour</i></li> <li>• <i>His concern is to restrict divorce for the superficial reasons in section 4. (Matt 5:31-32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-20)</i></li> <li>• <i>He was not speaking to women who might be suffering e.g. violence.</i></li> <li>• <i>But we know that God hates, violence, pride, dishonesty, false witness, idolatry, divisiveness and all kinds of evil (Deut 16:22; 12:31; Psa 11:5; Prov 6:16-19; Isa 1:14)</i></li> </ul>
<p>5. Paul allows divorce in the case of desertion for religious reasons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Paul deals with a situation where an unbeliever divorces a Christian for his/her faith and said the partner is "free" to remarry. 1 Cor 7:12-15</i></li> </ul>
<p>6. All matters of morality have to be decided on the basis of the lesser of two evils. It is not black and white. Divorce is possible when it is the lesser of two evils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>God is a God of mercy, forgiveness and new beginnings</i></li> <li>• <i>Killing is wrong but God allows killing in self defence or in war when it is the lesser of two evils.</i></li> <li>• <i>The Sabbath is holy but Jesus allows it to be broken for human need or an animal fallen in a pit.</i></li> <li>• <i>Paul says Christians must obey the authorities (Rom 13:1-7) but the apostles disobey the authorities as the lesser of two evils Acts 5:27-28.</i></li> </ul>
<p>7. The Bible does not provide a total list of subjects to which its principles apply but only a few examples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>So there is (of course) no reference to abortion or in vitro fertilisation or transplant surgery.</i></li> <li>• <i>Nor is there reference to every possible marital offence which warrants divorce.</i></li> <li>• <i>God expects us to apply the principles, not just the "letter", we find in Scripture</i></li> </ul>
<p>8. God in his love would not expect a woman to live in a situation of physical or mental abuse, cultic control, or where trust has broken down e.g. over money etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>God would also not want such a woman to live a life of singleness.</i></li> </ul>