***Lights in the World - PH49-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:14-15***

This is our series on lights in the world, number 22. When people are denied the living Word of God, they are denied access to God's thinking and, consequently, to God's blessing. So I hope that as we gather in these sessions that you will appreciate what is going on in these services, and the fact that we are dealing with the Word of God, which is alive and powerful. No more powerful part of that word is to be found than that which is in the moral principles relative to sexual relationships.

The seventh moral principle forbids premarital sex, which is generally referred to by the term "fornication," though fornication refers to sexual sins in general. It also forbids extramarital sex, which is generally referred to as "adultery," as well as all perverted forms of sex. Homosexuality and lesbianism are perversions, and they are soundly condemned by the Word of God. There is no defense and no excuse which makes them right. These are destructive to the soul and to the body, and they result in national weaknesses and in national destruction.

Christians, therefore, are to separate themselves from illicit sex, but they are also to separate themselves from practices which encourage illicit sex: mental attitudes that encourage it; the way you dress; your mannerisms; your speech; the things you look at; and, so on. All of this creates havoc in the soul and often leads to physical and emotional suicide.

**Bestiality**

Well, we've looked at the perversions of homosexuality and lesbianism. There's another perversion which is more common in our day than you think: bestiality. This is sex with animals. This is forbidden in the Word of God to the people of Israel (Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 18:23-30, Leviticus 20:15-16, Deuteronomy 27:21). For this sex crime, the penalty was death. This was because it pollutes a country, and it brings God's destructive effects upon a nation. Bestiality, as it was practiced in the ancient world, was actually a religious right. It was paganism's view of the method by which man could renew himself. It was actually a spiritual exercise to renew your spiritual life, believe it or not. That was the point of bestiality. It was the idea that man began as an animal. He began at a low animal level, and then progressed upward. So if you could return to that animal level, then you would begin the progress back upward, and thus renew your spiritual being.

Of course, the indication of Satan's hand is very clear here–this idea of renewing yourself spiritually by going to a lower level rather than looking upwards to a higher level. The motivating force, of course, behind bestiality is to degrade the image of God which is in man, and to establish the fact that man is an animal. This is the doctrine of evolution. Man is an animal. Therefore, man should move from the degraded animal level upward. As a matter of fact, this was clearly the concept of the Russian communists when, during the 1920s, they sent an expedition to Africa where they collected and carried on an experiment with female apes trying to mate with men (human beings) in order to try to reproduce a cross breed hybrid creature, and thus to establish that man was, after all, just mass in motion, as the communists say, without a soul; without a future; and, therefore simply to be treated on an animal level.

Well, needless to say, the Russian experiment was a huge failure because it is impossible to cross a human being with an animal. But bestiality is widely practiced in the United States today–the citadel of capitalism; the country with the highest standard of living in the world; the most enlightened people in the world; and, also those who are the most forceful in the propagating of the Word of God. In this country, this is widely practiced. This is, again, the idea of a conversion downward, and this concept of a conversion downward, which is expressed in bestiality, is also expressed in literature; in arts; in politics; in music; and, in religion.

Biblical morality preserves a person from sinking to an animal level. That's why we keep saying that you need to build a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. If you don't have a spiritual maturity structure built in your soul, you can only be an animal. You will act like an animal; you will think like an animal; you will feel like an animal; and, your choices will be on the animal level. That's why the Bible makes God and His commandments the center of life–in order to rise above the animal level.

**Humanism**

However, humanism comes along and it opposes this biblical principle. That is because humanism says that man is an animal. So it places man on the animal level with his human viewpoint at the center of life. So it rejects biblical morality as a hindrance to freedom, of all things. Humanism says that a principle like the seventh moral principle keeps people from being free. So humanism rejects it. This attitude has been reflected throughout, as we said, art, literature, science, and so on.

An interesting example of this is found in the architecture of the palace at Versailles which was built by Louis the 14th. John D. Wolfe wrote a book called Louis the 14th. In it, he described this building of the palace and the significance of the way the palace at Versailles was constructed. Mr. Wolfe says, "We cannot leave Versailles without reiterating that it had a purpose beyond being the residence for the king and his government. This great palace was a keystone in the new cult of royalty. In the preceding eras, the great constructions were usually to the glory of God. Even Philip the 2nd, when he built his great palace, made it a monastery with the chapel as the center of interest.

"At Versailles, the bedroom of the king is the center, identifying the king as the highest power on earth, while the chapel is to one side. The imposing grandeur of the chateau was evidence of the wealth of the kingdom, and its construction, without walls and moats, was proof of the power of the king's government. Versailles was a challenge–a defiance–flung out at all Europe, as impressive a display of wealth, power, and authority of the French king as were his armies and his warships. Europe did not miss this. The century after the construction of Versailles, chateaus at Vienna; at Potsdam; at Dresden; at Munich; at St. Petersburg; and, the very plans for the city of Washington D.C. reflected the influence of the grandeur of Versailles."

French humanism built a dramatic expression in that very palace of putting man and his animal qualities, as humanism envisions it, at the center of life. Well, you know what happened in France. It wasn't very long before the French Revolution came along, and this supposed expression of preserving freedom destroyed all freedom among the French people, and anarchy reigned.

So this conversion downward, as expressed in bestiality, is a commonplace event even in our day. It has been in modern times. It is man's attempt to put himself at the animal level that he believes he originated from. A movie was made recently about a farmer and a pig. The movie was in the pornographic category. This kind of thing can be made. It was a movie on bestiality. Believe it or not, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was there observing in order to preserve the rights of the pig, and to see that the animal was not mistreated. That's the United States of America, the citadel of Christian orientation. As a matter of fact, the same concept is accepted by the feminist movement. I will quote one of the leading ladies of the feminist movement, a lady named Betty Friedan. She addresses herself with these letters: "Ms."

I don't know if you fully understand that. Ordinary normal women have two titles. One of them is "Miss," which refers to maiden unmarried women. Then there is the other ordinary normal woman that carries the title "Mrs.," which is an abbreviation for mistress, and that refers to a married woman. But the feminist movement finds that they are in neither category. They're an odd breed. They're an odd mentality. So they have come up with this title "Ms." that Betty Friedan uses. And "Ms." stands for "mess." They try to deceive you because they pronounce it as "Miz." That's not correct. It stands for "mess," and whenever you see it, you should pronounce it "mess."

I am now going to quote Ms. Friedan in part. The article first says, "Late in May, the harridan of the feminist movement shared what was called the first economic think tank for women at the Center for Policy Research in New York City. Among the new concepts endorsed by the brain trusters assembled from management, labor, and government, were: shorter work weeks; job sharing; early retirement; and, educational sabbaticals involving paid leaves to attend universities, which Ms. Friedan said would create more positions for professors who are now an unemployed glut on the market. Conference expenses were paid by IBM, Xerox, and General Electric. Of course, Ms. Friedan has a long history of trying to change the impact of women on the economy. For instance, while she advocates standard income tax deductions for married lesbians, she adds for the press, 'Lesbianism is irrelevant to the movement. What you do in bed, and who you do it with, even if you do it with a sheep, is not relevant.' Isn't it heartwarming that such a creature is deemed by IBM, Xerox, and General Electric to be so ideal a representative of American womanhood as to chair their think tank?"

**Incest**

So you see, even the feminist movement has sunk to the level where bestiality is an accepted way of life, and not an objectionable feature. So the seventh moral principle is violated by bestiality, quite obviously. But there is another one that also violates it that we should look at. That is the subject of incest. Incest is prohibited in the Word of God. This is stated in Leviticus 18:1-18. What this refers to is marriage and cohabitation between certain relatives of a family group. In other words, it prohibits marriage between a direct ancestor, a direct descendant, or any close relative. In the Old Testament, certain incestuous relationships were spelled out. Some of these were incestuous because they were genetically related people–blood relatives. Some of these were incestuous from a spiritual frame of reference. They were family relationships, and they were viewed as incestuous, not because of genetic reasons (blood relationships), but because of family relationships. They were:

1. The Bible forbids marriage between mother and son. (By "marriage" we mean sexual relations between mother and son.) The Bible also spells out here marriage between stepmother and stepson. Now, by implication, we would also include father and daughter, and stepfather and stepdaughter.
2. The Bible forbids marriage between sister and brother, or half-sister and half-brother, or any combination thereof.
3. The Bible forbids marriage between granddaughter and grandfather, and by implication, between grandson and grandmother. Now, that might seem ridiculous to you on the surface. Who would want to marry his grandmother? But you must remember that, very frequently, these relationships are entered into for economic reasons–for property reasons. Many marriages have been made just exactly along these lines for reasons other than love. Consequently, they have opened the door to these illicit incestuous sexual relations.
4. The Bible forbids marriage between the daughter of a stepmother and her stepson (his stepsister), and between the son and stepdaughter by implication.
5. The Bible forbids marriage between a nephew and a sister of either his father or mother (that is, his aunt), or by implication between a niece and the brother of either her father or her mother.
6. The Bible forbids marriage between a nephew and the wife of his father's brother (that is, the nephew's uncle), or between the niece and the husband of her mother's sister. By implication here, that is her uncle.
7. The Bible forbids marriage between daughter-in-law and father-in-law. That would imply between mother-in-law and son-in-law.
8. The Bible forbids marriage between sister-in-law and brother-in-law.

Finally, the Bible forbids marriage between a man and both a woman and her daughter or her granddaughter. That is, in separate marriages. That is, to marry a mother; then she dies and the marriage is terminated; and, then to marry the daughter. That is considered an incestuous relationship among the people of Israel.

You can see that some of these are because of religious reasons, and some of them are because of genetic reasons. Upon some of these relationships, the penalty was death. For others, the divine judgment was childlessness, which meant no legal heir. Such marriages between relatives, though not normally attractive, as I say, were entered into for money and property reasons. The idea was to keep things in the family. The law today, of course, prohibits certain marriage relationships along certain lines, such as between brothers and sisters; first cousins; and, so on. They are primarily for the fact of genetic reasons. To follow through on some marriages of this nature results in the fact that it creates problems of accentuating weaknesses that are in a family line. But the practice today in society is, again, more widespread than you think. Sex between relatives of this nature is a common form of a violation of the seventh moral principle.

In the ancient world, incest was widespread. The pharaohs of Egypt regularly married their sisters, even down as far as the second century after Christ. The Roman emperor Caligula was one of the most outstanding of the immoral emperors, in this particular realm, in that he was incestuous with all his sisters, and finally sent them all into prostitution.

With the rise of humanism after the Renaissance, it became the style among the elite of European society to be as perverted as you could be in morals. So incest became very fashionable after the Renaissance, as humanism took over the thinking of the European intellectuals.

Well, of course, one of the basic objections to this is the fact that inbreeding accentuates genetic defects in the family–physical and mental weaknesses. This is exemplified, for example, in lines of royalty. Royal lines in certain countries have had, for example, a tendency toward bleeding–that a person who is cut doesn't coagulate. He's a bleeder. These genetic weaknesses are in certain family lines. When you bring people together, both of whom had this weakness, which happens when you intermarry within the family, that weakness is accentuated to a dominant point, where everybody who is born has this particular characteristic. So the problem is genetic.

Of course, Adam and Eve had no genetic weaknesses, and thus their children, who were brothers and sisters, were able to intermarry as the human race got started, without any adverse effects. But sin brought destructive effects, in time, so that these genetic weaknesses have, over the years, now born their effect. Today, the same motivation for abortion, in part, comes from those who are sympathetic toward incestuous relationships. Incest is one of the arguments that is presented for the legalization of abortion. Actually, it is championed by those who sponsor the concept of free love. What they mean is that this is living for them, and they end up by sponsoring death for the fetus as a result of their living. The humanist wants death for God's rules; for morality; for virtue; for unborn babies; and, for godliness. But God ultimately decrees death for the violators of His principles.

**Divorce**

There is one other area as we look at the concept of violation of the seventh moral principle. That is the area of the issue of divorce. So it's necessary for us to take a look at that feature in tying up this principle. It is in the area of divorce that the Lord Jesus pointed out that the seventh moral principle is widely violated.

So let's look, first of all, at the act of marriage. Marriage involves the union of a man and woman who, by mutual consent, before witnesses, have agreed to become lifelong sexual partners, and to build a home and a family. The Bible says that the death of a husband or a wife will end the marriage relationship. Don't go beyond what the Bible says. The Bible in various passages, remember, deals with an issue on the background of the times of a specific nature. So the Bible writers devote themselves to a specific issue, and they make a statement. They don't often say everything that there is to say about that particular issue, nor about that whole subject. You have to bring together everything that the Bible says in order to put together all that it has to say on the subject of marriage and divorce.

There is a group of religious leaders today who say that there is no such thing as divorce–period–over and out. Therefore, anybody who has ever followed the route of divorce, for any reason, is judged to be an adulterer. So let's begin with what the Scriptures say; don't go beyond what they say; and, let's see what it does say. Romans 7:1 says "Do you not know, brethren–for I speak to them that know the law–how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress. But if her husband is dead, she is free from that law so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, you also die to the law by the body of Christ that you should be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

The first thing to note is that Paul, in this passage, is not trying primarily to teach us something about marriage. He is trying to teach us something about what he has been talking about in Romans 6, which is that Christ has died for the believers; therefore, we are free from the judgment of the law. The judgments of the law once kept us as slaves. We were bound to it. Now, Christ having died, we are freed from that law. We are freed from that control. Then he says, "Let me see. How can I illustrate this?" He said, "I'll illustrate it with marriage. The moment a woman marries a man, she leaves the authority of her father and comes under the authority of her husband. She is now under his complete care and his complete supervision. She is under his authority. She is bound legally to that man." Paul says, "As long as he lives." His law is operational over her. But if he dies, then his law is no longer operational over her. Therefore, she is now free. Free from what? Free from the legal restraint by being the wife of that man. He's dead. With him died his authority over her.

Paul says that's exactly what happened with us and the law. As Christ died to the law for us, we're free from it, and we are no longer under the law system. That's all he's saying there. 1 Corinthians 7:39 adds this: "The wife is bound as long as her husband lives. (The words "by the law" are not in the Greek.) But if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul is answering some questions about Christian marriage. One of the things he again points out is that when a woman's husband dies, the marriage is over. It's at an end. Therefore, she could remarry with complete freedom.

However, as a Christian, there's only one restriction on her–she has to marry another Christian. A Christian cannot marry a non-Christian. This is always God's order. When you marry a person, you must always marry a Christian. If you know enough about the Word of God, you must add another factor. That is that women should not marry men who are their spiritual inferiors. That will bring you grief. A woman should always seek to marry her right man who will, if she is a Christian woman, always be a Christian man who is her spiritual superior. He will be in a position to be teaching her, and not she teaching him.

This is the general law of marriage. But I want to point out to you that these people who say, "No divorce ever under any condition unless the person is dead," they build it on these passages. But Paul said what he had to say in each specific situation. But we also have additional information that gives us an exception to this general rule. Let me read those, and then we'll come back to them. 1 Corinthians 7:15 gives an exception. This is in the case of a Christian who is married to a non-Christian. It says, "But if the unbelieving depart (and the word "depart" means "divorce"), let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace."

So, obviously, here is a case where a Christian is married to an unbeliever, and the unbeliever says, "I don't like your Christian way of life. I don't like your attitude. I don't like your frame of reference. I don't like your goals in life. I don't want to stay married to you." In other words, a person deserts the individual. That person deserts the believer and pursues a divorce. Then Paul says, "In that case, you as a Christian, are free from that marriage." The marriage is null and void in that case, even though the person who is departed is still alive. It's null and void. The person has departed; he's still alive; but, the marriage is out. You're not under bondage. That's what it means when it says, "God has called us to peace." God has not called you to fight and to snarl and to squabble in such a situation. He has called you, rather, to peace.

Then there is another passage that we must also bring to bear, and this one from the Lord himself. In Romans 7, the apostle Paul is dealing with marriage on the basis of what the Lord Jesus Christ taught in Matthew 5. Then Paul is adding information on specific case situations which the Lord did not deal with. Again, I remind you that in a certain passage of Scripture at a certain point of time on a certain background of customs in the era of the lifestyle of the people to whom it is written, the writers of the Bible are dealing with specific issues. They're answering a specific issue. They're not teaching the whole doctrine at any particular point. But here's another piece that we do have to add to what we have in the general principle of Romans 7.

That is Matthew 5:32, where Jesus says, "But I say unto you that whoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery, and whoever shall marry her that is divorced, commits adultery. So here's another exception. This exception is that if one of the marriage partners is guilty of illicit sex (extramarital sex, or adultery), and on a persistent basis, then the innocent party is justified in seeking a divorce from that person. While it is couched in terms here of the woman being adulterous, the same is true of the man. So here you have an exception, again, to the general principle of marriage.

When you put it all together, what do you get? God says two people are joined together before witnesses and before God in a lifelong union until death do them part. That's the general order. There is no dissolving of that order. So the Bible says, "What God has joined together," which He does under those conditions, "let no man seek to put asunder."

Then two exceptions come along. One, if a person deserts a partner in marriage (the example in Scripture had to do specifically between a believer and an unbeliever), and that person deserts the individual and leaves that person and pursues the divorce, then the other person is free to remarry. The marriage is null and void. Or if there was a case of adultery, then again, the divorce is in order, and the marriage is null and void.

What I am stressing when I say that the divorce is in order is something else that goes with divorce. With divorce goes the privilege of remarriage. You will also get this idea from some Bible teachers, because they're using just part of the verses, and that is that a person can be divorced. "Oh, yes," they say. "But the divorced person must never remarry." We'll get to that in a moment as to why they say that.

So the death penalty was applied for adulterous relationships. This death penalty in the Old Testament was executed as a legal action of the Commonwealth of Israel. Today, the death penalty may be exercised in the form of discipline as the sin unto death for those who are guilty of this sin. This, in effect, is divorce by death, in either case.

The principle of marriage, of course, was stated in Genesis 2:18-24. There we are told that a man and woman come together; they become one flesh; they leave their parents; they leave everyone else; and, they cleave to one another. In the sex act, they become actually one physical unit. This ordinance did not contemplate divorce. In Genesis 2:18-24, where the basic setup of marriage is found, there is no contemplation of divorce whatsoever. As a matter of fact, Malachi 2:15-16 tells us that God hates what the Jews were doing in their widespread practice of divorce–the putting away of wives. Divorce is actually condemned in the New Testament.

So let's turn to 1 Corinthians 7 again, and go back up to verse 10: "And unto the married, I command, yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband." The word "depart" here means "divorce." "Let not the wife divorce her husband. And if she divorces him, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband, and let not the husband put away (which means divorce) his wife."

Here we have another factor thrown in. Four times, the Bible refers to divorce. Three times, it simply indicates that once they're divorced, the marriage is over, and they are free to remarry. Now, you come to this passage in 1 Corinthians 7, and you find a new factor interjected, where Paul says, "If a woman divorces her husband, then she is to remain unmarried," which indicates that she could legally be married again. That's why he's telling her to remain unmarried. It means she could go to a court of law and be remarried. She is in a status of legal divorce, but it says she is not to remarry. Whereas the other cases of divorce say, "When divorce comes, that's the end. The marriage is done, and remarriage is open to that party."

Well, what this passage is indicating is that a woman leaves her husband for reasons other than the two specifics. First, he did not deserve her. Secondly, he is not guilty of sexual infidelity. Therefore, she doesn't have grounds for divorcing him, but she does it anyhow. What the Bible is indicating here is that she has a legal divorce, but not a spiritual divorce. She is divorced in the eyes of the law, but not in the eyes of God. Therefore, in this case, because she departed on other than these two grounds, these two legitimate grounds for divorce, she is therefore to stay unmarried. She could get another legal marriage, but God says you've already got a marriage with Me. Therefore, you cannot enter another legal marriage. The other option is to be reconciled to her husband. You notice it calls him her husband because he is still her husband.

So that's the picture all around. Ordinarily, you cannot separate two people who have been joined as one flesh. You can't take your body and cut it into two pieces. So in God's eyes, those who've been made one cannot be separated. But sin entered the human race. That created problems, and therefore this brought up the necessity of certain regulations. Actually, this question that was put to the Lord by the Pharisees upon which the Matthew 5 passage is based, with the exception of fornication as the basis of divorce, as a question upon the divorce law that Moses permitted. That divorce law is in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Incidentally, remember that the word "fornication" is a general word for illicit sex. It covers premarital sex; it covers extramarital sex; it covers homosexuality and lesbianism; it covers bestiality; and, anything down the line. This is the general word. It is important that you be aware of the fact that it is covering all kinds of illicit sex, and that is grounds for divorce.

Now, here's what Moses had to do, because the old sin nature came in, and the old sin nature is desirous of adulterous relationships when a wife is no longer pleasing to the man. Notice that Deuteronomy 24 does not deal with a wife who has been unfaithful. Deuteronomy 24 deals simply with a wife that some guy decides he doesn't like anymore: "When a man has taken a wife and married her, and it comes to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her." That uncleanness is not sexual uncleanness. It means something offensive to him. "Then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."

For 14 centuries, from Moses to Christ, the Jews operated on this passage with a very formal bill of divorcement. This dealt with the situation when a man decided he didn't care for his wife anymore, for any kind of trivial reasons. He could say, "You put too much salt in the soup. I'm divorcing you." Or he could say, "You didn't cut the lawn. I'm divorcing." Or he could say, "Go out there and help poor Mrs. So-and-so. Her husband is sick." He knows that her husband is already dead. She walks into the house to help Mrs. So-and-so, and thereby she is defiled because she has walked into a house where there's a dead body. She comes back home and he says, "I'm divorcing you. You're defiled." And he could do it.

All he had to do was write this out: "On (blank) day of the week, (blank) day of the month, in the year (blank), I, who am also called son of (blank), of the city of (blank), by the river (blank), do hereby consent with my own will, being under no restraint, and I do hereby release and send away and put aside you, my wife (blank), who is also called daughter of (blank), who is this day in the city of (blank) by the river (blank), who has been my wife for some time past. And thus I do release you and send you away and put you aside that you may have permission and control over yourself, to go to be married to any man that you may desire, and that no man shall hinder you from this day forward, and you are permitted to any man. And this shall be unto you from me a bill of dismissal, a document of release, and a letter of freedom according to the Law of Moses of Israel."

And then the two witnesses signed it. That was repeatedly given to women who were in disfavor to their husbands. It was this question that the Pharisees brought: "Is this a proper reason for divorce for any cause?" They never questioned the Lord whether a divorce meant that the marriage was over, and a person could be remarried. Everybody knew that. What they were asking Jesus was, "Is it alright to divorce your wife for any cause?" And here's why they were asking it.

A generation before there was a rabbi named Hillel. Hillel said that you could divorce your wife for anything. You could just give her this writ in front of witnesses. There was another rabbi named Shimei. The school of Shimei said, "No, you're wrong. Divorce can only be for one thing, and that's fornication." So along came the Pharisees, and what they were asking Jesus was, "Who's right? Hillel or Shimei?" Jesus, first of all, went back to the beginning and said, "You know how it was in the beginning." Jesus said, "It is true that Moses gave you this writ of the divorcement. But," He said, "he gave it to you because of the old sin nature, which came in with its adulterous desires and its abuse of a woman as a result of that. So for her protection, Moses gave you this writ of divorcement." But Jesus said, "I'm telling you that if you use this for any reason for divorcement that Moses had to give you because of the way you people are, you are guilty of creating adultery. You cannot divorce a wife for any cause. You can divorce her for desertion, and you can divorce her for adultery, but you cannot divorce wife or husband for any cause. If you do divorce, then you must remain unmarried or be reconciled."

So the rest of this passage in Deuteronomy 24 says, "He sent her out of his house. When she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife." The divorce meant you could remarry. "And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement (This is her second husband.), and gives it in her hand, and sends her out of this house, or if the latter husband dies, who took her to be his wife, her former husband (the previous husband who sent her away) may not take her again to be his wife. After that, she is defiled. For that is abomination before the Lord, and you shall not cause the land to sin, which the Lord your God gave you for an inheritance."

You couldn't go back to a previous husband under the laws of Israel. Under the theocracy, that was considered a defilement. But she could marry someone else. So when Jesus dealt with this passage in Deuteronomy, He was agreeing to what the Pharisees said it did say–that it was for every cause, but He was pointing out that it was a stipulation under the necessity of the time, but it was wrong. But in this particular case, this wife under these conditions was innocent and free to remarry.

So marriage with a person who's been divorced for reasons other than sexual immorality or adultery is forbidden (Mark 10:11-12). The legitimate grounds for divorce are spelled out for us in the statement of the Lord in Matthew, and in the statement of 1 Corinthians 7. God joins a man and a woman upon declaration of intent of marriage and consummation sexually. No human agency can dissolve this except for the two restrictive reasons.

Mark 10:9 sums it up. It also sums up the widest violation of this principle in the United States today by courts of law: "What therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder." Indeed, when a court of law gives you a divorce, it makes your marriage null and void, legally. But if it was not for scriptural reasons, it is not null and void with God. So get that distinction, and apply it accordingly, whatever your situation may be.

Of course, the best thing for all of this is that the seventh moral principle should never come into a position where it has to be violated because of any issue of divorce. That means that we have to go back and know what the marriage game is all about: how to go into it; how to approach it; and, how you get into that situation to begin with. That is because how you get into it determines the issues of divorce, and consequently, the issues of the morality that is involved.

The seventh moral principle: a nation that ignores it is a nation historically which has always gone to destruction. We live in a bad scene today because of that fact in our own country.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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