

Dealing with Divorce in the Parish

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Table of Contents

Part One: The Scriptures on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

- The Teaching of Jesus
 - Matthew 19:3-12 (Mark 10:2-12) 1
 - Matthew 5:31,32 6
 - Luke 16:18 9
 - Summary 10
- The Teaching of Paul
 - 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 11
 - 1 Corinthians 7:39,40 16
 - Romans 7:2,3 17
 - Summary 19
- Summary of the Scriptures on Remarriage 20

Part Two: Disciplining and Counseling Those with Troubled Marriages

- How to Get People to Come to You 22
- Counseling Methodology 24
- Applying Church Discipline 27

Part Three: Ministering to the Divorced and Their Families

- A Profile of Divorced Members and Their Families 32
- Congregational Support of the Divorced and Their Families 33

Part Four: Practicing Preventive Medicine

- Teaching About Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in Youth and Adult Confirmation Classes 34
- Pre-Marital Counseling 36
- Marriage Enrichment 37

Objectives

1. To review the passages in the Scriptures, particularly the New Testament, that deal with marriage, divorce and remarriage, to compare the Scriptures with current WELS literature on the subject, in particular the pamphlet *A Study of Marriage, Divorce, Malicious Desertion and Remarriage in the Light of God's Word; The Shepherd Under Christ*, pp. 286-292; and *The Counseling Shepherd*, pp. 147-163, and in this way to become clearer on the scriptural principles involved in dealing with divorce in the parish.
2. To sharpen skills, both in proper use of law and gospel and in methodology, in counseling and disciplining those with troubled or failed marriages.
3. To increase awareness of the need to practice preventive medicine and also of the need to minister to the growing number of divorced individuals and their families, and to provide practical suggestions on how to do this.

4. To provide a forum for brothers in the ministry to encourage, strengthen and equip one another for a most difficult part of the ministry.
5. Above all, under God, to increase our awareness of the need to deal and our desire and ability to deal in an evangelical manner—a manner which is neither lax nor legalistic—in matters concerning divorce and remarriage.

Outline

- The Scriptures on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage
- Disciplining and Counseling Those with Troubled Marriages
- Ministering to the Divorced and Their Families
- Practicing Preventive Medicine

PART ONE: THE SCRIPTURES ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

The Teaching of Jesus

Matthew 19:3-9 (parallel: Mark 10:2-12)

Mt 19:1,2

Broad context: Perea ministry

Repeats much prior teaching (e.g., Mt 5:31,32)

- New audience
- Review for disciples

Mt 19:3

Immediate context: v. 3, *καὶ προσῆλθον αὐτῷ φαρισαῖοι πειράζοντες* [circumstantial ptc., purpose] *αὐτόν*

The temptation: [I wonder] *εἰ ἔξεστιν ἀνθρώπῳ...ἀπολῦσαι* (aorist inf.) [along with *ἀφίημι* t.t. for divorce] *τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν*

School of Shammai: strict, only serious sexual offenses

School of Hillel: loose, almost anything was grounds for divorce

With which would Jesus identify?

Mt 19:4-6

Jesus' response avoids the trap. Refuses to side with either man. Goes directly to Scripture. His point: This question should be asked of God, for God is the author of marriage. Three points in these verses:

- 1) God created man and woman

ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς (Ge 1:27)

- 2) God created man and woman for marriage

ἐνεκα τούτου ... ἄνθρωπος (Ge 2:24), i.e., because God, after he had created man, then created woman from the man and brought her to the man as a helper fit for him

καταλείπει (Heb., *azab*) - LEAVING

κολληθήσεται (Heb., *davaq*) - CLEAVING

ἔσονται οἱ εἰς σάρκα μίαν - BECOMING ONE FLESH

ὁ οὖν ὁ θεὸς συνέζευξεν - Marriage is a divine institution

ἄνθρωπος μὴ χωριζέτω - This is Jesus' commentary on the Genesis account. Man is, not to separate (put space between) what God has joined together. Doesn't mean he is unable to do this, but is told not to do so.

3) God's intention is that the marriage bond be permanent, indissoluble ("Till death us do part," cf. Ro 7:2,3; 1 Co 7:39).

MARRIAGE = AN UNCONDITIONAL, PERMANENT COMMITMENT OF ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN TO EACH OTHER

Mt 19:7

The Pharisees here are appealing to Dt 24:1-4. Note how they distort the meaning of the passage, giving the idea that Moses required men to divorce their wives under certain circumstances.

Thus they set up a false antithesis:

Moses said, "Divorce."

You said, "Don't divorce."

A brief look at the Deuteronomy passage:

Note that, as in NIV, protasis is first three verses, while apodosis is verse 4. Point of the verses (Keil-Delitzsch): "In these verses... divorce is not established as a right; all that is done is, that in case of a divorce a reunion with the divorced wife is forbidden, if in the meantime she had married another man, even though the second husband had also put her away, or had died." So also the LXX. Point is not that this passage sanctions or approves divorce; but it does indicate that God tolerated divorce among his OT people. The passage both recognizes the existence of divorce and, to a degree, regulates it (cf. also Lev 21:7,14; 22:13; Nu 30:9).

v. 1 -

A man's wife "becomes displeasing to him" (lit., "doesn't find favor with him") - Because he finds "something indecent about her."

"something indecent" - Heb., *erwath dabar* (LXX, ἀσχήμων πράγμα), lit., "a thing of nakedness,," i.e., something indecent, but probably not a specific reference to adultery, because its punishment was death (cf. Dt 23:12-14 where same phrase is used to describe what the Lord shouldn't see as he walked among Israel, "nothing indecent" [which is why the Israelites were to have their latrines outside the camp]). Various interpretations by the teachers of the law, very narrowly as well as very broadly.

“certificate of divorce” - Heb., *k'riythuth* (“cutting off”) *sepher*. Its prescribed content unknown. A legal document, it served to deter hasty action on the part of the husband. Also protected the wife inasmuch as it declared her repudiation by her husband to be founded on something else than violation of her marriage vow and thus also permitted her to remarry.

v. 4-

“defiled” - Heb., *hattammah* - Root *tamah* used in OT of moral, religious or ceremonial pollution. How is she “defiled”? Probably through sexual relations with a second husband when she should still have been with her first husband.

Conclusion – Not that the Lord is here putting his stamp of approval on divorce. Quite the opposite. Cf. Mal 2:16, “‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel.” Rather, it puts a check on “frivolous divorce” (Keil-Delitzsch).

Mt 19:8

πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν, i.e., divorce was not God’s intention. It was because Israel rejected God’s will that divorce came into the picture.

ἐπέτρεψεν - Not “commanded,” but “permitted.” Divorce was a concession to Israel’s weakness.

Note: Put a little differently in Mark (10:2-4):

Pharisees: “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

Jesus: “What did Moses command (ἐνετείλατο) you?”

Pharisees: “Moses permitted (ἐπέτρεψεν) a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away. “

Best to take Jesus’ question here in the sense of, “What instructions did Moses give you?”

ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς δὲ οὐ γέγονεν οὕτως - From the beginning there wasn’t even this permission of God. Divorce is a sundering of a union God has created. Note the perfect γέγονεν: Divorce was not God’s will in the past and it still isn’t.

Mt 19:9

λέγω ἀρχῆς δὲ οὐ γέγονεν οὕτως - Repeats a formula frequently heard in the Sermon on the Mount, but without the emphatic ἐγώ. The popular piety of the day had distorted God’s original purpose for marriage: an unconditional, permanent commitment. Jesus takes them back to God’s intention.

ὅς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ - ὅς ἂν is inclusive. No one omitted.

μὴ ἐπὶ πορνεία -

πορνεία: Probably from πέρνημι, “to sell.” πόρνη was used for a prostitute. πορνεία is unlawful sexual intercourse, e.g., adultery, prostitution, incest, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality (all sexual aberrations, punishable by death in Lev 18 and 20). Could be on the part of the married or

unmarried. A broader term than *μοιχεία*. In the LXX *πορνεία* was the translation for *zanah*, while *μοιχεύω* regularly represents *na'aph*.

καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην - The second half of the protasis: “Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another...”

μοιχᾶται - Divorce and remarriage are in coordination: “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery—except in cases of *πορνεία*. ”Wrongful divorce is sinful; but it is not adultery unless the one who wrongfully divorced his wife then marries another, thus establishing a new one flesh relationship.

Note: These words (Mt 19:9) were spoken in public to the Pharisees, while the same words, minus the exception, were apparently repeated to the disciples in private following this (cf. MK 10 account):

Mk 10:10

“When they were in the house again “ Helps to explain the apparent discrepancy between Mt 19:9 and Mk 10:11,12, which doesn't include the exception clause. The Mark account presupposes that the fuller statement, which includes the exception clause, has already been heard by the disciples. Here the emphasis is simply that, since marriage is a permanent commitment, it should not be broken.

Mk 10:11

μοιχᾶται ἐπ' αὐτήν, i.e., against his first wife

Mk 10:12

εἰν αὕτη ἀπολύσασα τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς γαμήσῃ ἄλλον μοιχᾶται - Makes it clear there is no double standard. What Jesus said applies equally to men and women. According to Josephus, Jewish law didn't permit a woman to initiate a divorce. Hence Mt, written with a Jewish audience in mind, doesn't mention a woman's action. Roman law did permit a woman to initiate a divorce. Mk, written with a Roman audience in mind, therefore makes sure to include these words of Jesus.

Mt 19: 10

εἰ αὕτως ἐστὶν ἡ αἰτία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μετὰ τῆς γυναικός - “If the case [*αἰτία* here a Latinism: *res*] of a husband with a wife is like this [*αὕτως*], i.e., if the divorce laws are so stringent, it's better (*συμφέρει*) not to marry at all. The disciples are clearly children of their time in their understanding of marriage and divorce.

Mt 19:11,12

οὐ πάντες χωροῦσιν τὸν λόγον τοῦτον, ἀλλ' οἷς δέδοται – τὸν λόγον τοῦτον refers to the disciples' statement that it would be better not to get married if the divorce laws are so strict. Jesus responds that celibacy is not for everyone, but only for those to whom that gift is given. Three groups: those with low sexual drive, those who have been physically emasculated, those who have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom.

Matthew 5:31.32

Introduction

Spoken during Sermon on Mount in section where he is contrasting the popular, but false, piety of the day and the true intent of the law (6 times in chapter, “You have heard that it was said But I say to you...”).

Mt 5:31

ὅς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ ... δότω αὐτῇ ἀποστάσιον - A reference to Dt 24: 1. This is not an exact quote of either the Heb or the LXX. An obvious distortion of the purpose of Dt 24:1-4 (cf. discussion under Mt 19:7).

ἀπολύω - t.t. for “divorce”

Mt 5:32

ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν – cf. vv. 22, 28, 34, 39, 44

πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ - With πᾶς no one is excluded who fits the category he describes here.

παρεκτὸς λόγου πορναία - Cf. Mt 19:6. Husband not commanded to put away his wife; but he is permitted to do so under the circumstance of his wife’s πορναία. This is the one exception (vs. the idea that one could divorce his wife for “any and every reason” [Mt 19:31]). With these words Jesus is not liberalizing divorce laws, but restricting divorce among Jewish believers who had been brought up in a society that had adopted very liberal grounds for divorce.

ποιεῖ αὐτὴν μοιχευθῆναι (aor pass), καὶ ὅς ἐάν ἀπολελυμένην γαμήσῃ μοιχᾶται (pres mid or pass)

Two possible interpretations:

1. Translate both as passives (Lenski, Panning [VVLQ 79: 1, Winter 1982, pp 51,52]) and bring out this meaning with “stigmatized as an adulteress/adulterer. “ Doesn’t forbid remarriage, but both she and her new spouse will be stigmatized as being in an adulterous relationship. Yet neither of them has committed adultery; rather they have had something committed upon them (Hendriksen. “The Greek, by using the passive voice of the verb, states not what the woman becomes or what she does but what she undergoes, suffers, is exposed to”). Even if the woman never married again, she would still be “adulterated,” made to look like an adulteress (cf. GWN translation, “causes her to be looked upon as an adulteress”) since she was put away by her husband.
2. Take both in the active sense, as do virtually all

a) Lexicons/Grammars

BAG: “he causes her to commit adultery” (by contracting a subsequent marriage).

Kittel: Passive, when used of the woman, means “to commit adultery” (IV,729ff). Refers to Lev 20:10 in the LXX, where the active is used of the man and the passive used of the woman, ὁ μοιχεύων καὶ ἡ μοιχευομένη, “the adulterer and the adulteress” (NIV).

Mt III: “Makes his wife an adulteress.”

Louw/Nida: “‘Makes her guilty of committing adultery,’ presumably on the implication that she would marry someone else, as is implied in the final clause of Mt 5:32. “

b) English versions, e.g., the NIV, “causes her to commit adultery... commits adultery. “

c) Commentaries, e.g.,

Ylvisaker, “‘Caused her to commit adultery, that is, by giving her the right to wed another. If she makes use of this privilege, she commits adultery, because the first marriage was not dissolved before God.... She was yet in the eyes of God the wife of the man who without adultery had secured the divorce. Morally, she was still bound to him. Therefore the person also commits adultery who weds the one who has been divorced for arbitrary reasons. He lives with a person who is regarded by God as the wife of another man” (p 269).

Stoeckhardt gives it little different twist: “It is understood here that the wife agreed to the unscriptural divorce and married another man, and he who marries a woman, who was divorced contrary to divine right, is also an adulterer before God” (*Wisdom for Today*, p 93).

Conclusion:

No compelling reasons advanced to give anything other than a normal passive rendering to a passive infinitive: “causes her to be adulterated.” She becomes “spoiled goods.” The Leviticus passage adduced by Kittel as proof that the passive of *μοιχεύω* should be translated in the active sense when used of the woman isn’t convincing since *μοιχευομένη* could be a middle as well as a passive. If *μοιχευθῆναι* is translated in a passive sense, this warrants taking *μοιχᾶται* at the end of the verse, which could be either passive or middle, as a passive also, giving us the rendering of the GWN translation:

Everyone who divorces his wife, except for the fact that she has been sexually unfaithful, causes her to be looked upon as an adulteress, and whoever marries a divorced woman is looked upon as an adulterer.

Either way the point of the passage is that if a man divorces his wife for any reason except for *πορνεία* on her part, it not only adversely affects him, but her and anyone she might subsequently marry.

ἀπλελυμένην - To whom does this refer? Undoubtedly not to every woman who has been divorced for any reason, but to the one described at the beginning of the verse, i.e., the one who has been put away by her husband for reason other than *πορνεία* and has remarried.

Luke 16:18

πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ - This verse begins in exactly the same way as Mt 5:31. Once again, with *πᾶς*, no one is excluded who fits the category Jesus describes here.

μοιχεύει ... μοιχεύει - Both are pres act: “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.”

Passage as it stands appears to say that there are no exceptions: Anyone who remarries after a divorce commits adultery and anyone who marries a divorced person commits adultery. Must look at the context. Jesus is speaking against the permissive attitude of the Pharisees who were playing loose with the law. They were lovers of Mammon rather than of God (vv. 13,14) and yet tried to justify all their actions as meriting God’s favor (v 15). They were trying to storm their way into the kingdom by means of their watered down version of the law (v 16). Jesus tells them (v 17) that God will hold them responsible for every “stroke of a letter of the law.” He then uses God’s law about divorce as an example. He emphasizes that marriage is permanent, that divorce is wrong, and that therefore remarriage is a sin of adultery against one’s former wife. Jesus here is stating the general principle, which must, though, be studied in conjunction with Mt 19:9 and 5:31,32 with their “exception” clauses.

Summary of Jesus on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

1. Speaks of the subject on three occasions: 1) Mt 5:31,32; 2) Lk 16:18; 3) Mt 19:3-12; Mk 10:2-12.
2. Upholds Ge 1 & 2. Marriage is an unconditional, permanent commitment of one man and one woman to each other.
3. Agrees with Malachi 2:16 on divorce.
4. Opposes the popular piety of the day (Mt 5:31; 19:7; Mk 10:4).
5. Reiterates the permanence of the marriage bond (Mt 19:6; Mk 10: 8,9).
6. Calls divorce followed by remarriage adultery
 - committed by the divorcer against the one divorced (Mk 10: 11);
 - committed by the one who marries the divorcer (Lk 16:18);
 - applies to action by either husband or wife (Mk 10: 11, 12);
 - implicates in some way even the innocent party (Mt 5:32).
7. Permits divorce and also by implication remarriage on the part of the “innocent” party if the other spouse has sinfully broken the marriage bond, the union of two *εἰς μίαν σάρκα*, through *πορνεία*.

The Teaching of Paul

1 Corinthians 7:10-16

Introduction -

Whole chapter is on the subject of marriage. Addresses those who have never been married, those who have formerly been married (widows), and those who are presently married. Apparently he is responding to a question of the Corinthians, “Is it better for one not to be married?” On the whole Paul’s advice is to remain in whatever state one presently is (v. 17, 20). He recognizes, though, that this is not always possible, since not all have the special gift of celibacy (v. 7). “It is better to marry than to burn with passion (πυροῦσθαι)” (v. 9). He is not talking about sinful lust here, but with the natural sexual desire God has implanted in most.

Paul has several specific words for Christians who are married:

- 1) They should be faithful to each other: ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἔχέτω καὶ ἑκάστη τὸν ἴδιον ἄνδρα ἔχέτω (v. 2).
- 2) They should not deprive each other sexually (vv. 3-5).
- 3) They should not separate. And if they do separate, they should not marry another, but be reconciled (vv. 10, 11).
- 4) Even if they are married to an unbeliever, they should not divorce him or her. If the unbelieving spouse leaves, however, the believing spouse is no longer “bound.” The marriage has come to an end (w. 12-16).

1 Co 7:10

παραγγέλλω - In classical Gk used of a military command.

παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλὰ κύριος - Not that Paul’s word is somehow deficient, but that he is saying the same thing the Lord had said before him (Mt 5:31,32; 19:3-12; Mk 10:2-12; Lk 16:18).

χωρισθῆναι - The passive often functions as a middle (“be separated from” = “separated oneself from”). This word is used in legal papyri for “divorce” (also ἀφίημι, the terms being used interchangeably).

Interesting that Paul speaks here first to the woman, who according to Jewish (but not Graeco-Roman) law had no right at all to divorce her husband. Some problems in Corinth with women wanting to do just that?

1 Co 7:11

ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρίσθῃ ... (future more vivid): “But if a separation does (καί, indeed) take place... “ Note that this is not giving a right to separate (as the exception clauses in Mt 5:32 and 19:9 give the right for a divorce); rather Paul is recognizing, as Moses had recognized before him (Dt 24: 1ff), that Christians, too, are weak and might not follow God’s will in this. If they don’t follow it, they should not compound their sin by marrying another.

This is not to say that a temporary separation—or even a lengthier one at times—may not be called for; but it cannot be drawn from this passage that the Scriptures sanction separation. For that one needs to turn elsewhere in Scripture. Certain sins vs the 5th commandment against one’s spouse or children, for

example, may require it during the time help is being sought for the person/couple. Persistent refusal on the part of the offending spouse, to change his behavior may even necessitate that the separation be permanent (1 Co 7:15 would play in at that point).

Jay Adams is too severe in maintaining that separation, except for a very brief time, is always impermissible. He allows for only two options: reconciliation or, in some instances, divorce. He correctly maintains, however, that separation for the most part is running away from the problem, that two people who can't solve their problems while living under the same roof will find it nearly impossible to solve them while not living under the same roof. They will instead find a sense of relief and peace when separated which will hinder them from actively seeking reconciliation.

μενέτω ἄγαμος - Note the present impv. Let this be the continuing state. The one leaving is not permitted to marry another.

ἀφιέναι (pres inf) - What applies to the wife applies equally to the husband: παραγγέλλω ... γυναῖκα ἀπὸ ἀνδρός μὴ χωρισθῆναι ... καὶ ἀνδρα γυναῖκα μὴ ἀφιέναι. According to lexicons ἀφίημι and χωρίζω are synonymous here, both in the legal sense meaning “divorce.”

1 Co 7:12-13

τοῖς λοιποῖς, i.e., to another group or class of people, in this case the unequally yoked (assumes that vv. 10-11 refers to two Christians).

λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος, i.e., Jesus didn't publicly teach anything about what follows. Yet no less authoritative, since spoken by an apostle of Christ.

εἴ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον - The situation, apparently, was that of one spouse being converted to Christianity; so now one has a mixed marriage.

καὶ αὕτη συνευδοκεῖ οικεῖν μετ' αὐτοῦ - The second part of the protasis of a simple conditional sentence (εἴ with the indicative).

μὴ ἀφιέτω αὐτήν - The believing husband should not “send away,” that is, divorce, his unbelieving wife as long as she consents to live with him.

In verse 13 Paul repeats the same words, addressing them to the believing wife who has an unbelieving husband.

Note how clear and unambiguous are Paul's directions: Husband/wife, if you have an unbelieving spouse and he/she is content to keep on living with you, don't leave your spouse. This doesn't mean, of course, that one couldn't do it in the case of *πορνεία* on the part of the unbelieving spouse. It does mean that the believing spouse shouldn't leave the non-believer simply because he/she isn't a Christian.

1 Co 7:14

ἡγίασται ἐν τῇ γυναικί ... ἐν τῷ ἀδελφῷ - ἐν is a dative of personal agent: “by, or in the person of.” Idea apparently is that the unbelieving spouse is exposed to a sanctifying influence when a believing spouse continues to live with him/her (doesn't mean “saved”). Note the perfect tense, stressing the ongoing nature of this sanctifying influence, which began when the marriage began and continues as long as the

marriage continues. Here is a key reason (apart from God's ordinance, "Let not man separate") for a believing spouse not to separate from an unbelieving spouse.

Note:

GWN's translation: doesn't seem to hit the point: "An unbelieving husband married to such a wife serves a holy purpose, and an unbelieving wife married to a believer serves a holy purpose."

ἐπεὶ ἄρα - An implied contrary to fact: "Since otherwise i.e., "If it were not so that a believing spouse can be a sanctifying influence in a marriage, then your children would be unclean."

νὺν δὲ ἅγια ἐστὶν – δέ an adversative. A comforting thought: It doesn't necessarily take two Christian parents to produce children who are ἅγια.

The key point of verses 12-14: The believing partner is to do nothing to break up the marriage and everything to preserve it.

1 Co 7:15

εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος (emphatic position) χωρίζεται, χωριζέσθω - A simple condition. What is envisioned here is something that originates with the unbelieving spouse, not a mutual agreement to separate.

χωρίζεται (present middle) - Opposite of ζεύγνυμι (cf. Mt 19:6; Mk 10:9); often used of "divorce" in the papyri. Primarily the idea is that of spatial separation (χώρα = field). Point is that the unbelieving partner no longer desires to remain married and leaves his spouse: if so, let him go.

χωριζέσθω (present middle impv.) - Not so much a command as, "If he's done it, let him do it" (Rob 948: permissive use of the impv.). Don't try any longer to keep the marriage together; it's over.

οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἀδελφὴ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις is qualitative, "in such circumstances," i.e., where it is impossible for the believing partner (the "brother" or "sister") to hold the marriage together, of which physical leaving is the example Paul cites.

οὐ δεδούλωται - And therefore is free to remarry. Jay Adams: "All the bonds of marriage have been removed. He is released entirely from every marriage obligation, and is a totally free person. Nor is there any obligation to be reconciled in marriage. " It should be noted, however, that remarriage is not Paul's point here. Yet it is not an improper logical deduction to say that if the believing partner is not bound and continues to be not bound (perfect tense), then he/she is free to remarry (compare with verse 39 of this chapter with its contrast between δέδεταί and ἐλευθέρα γαμηθῆναι).

ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός - Possible interpretations:

- 1) You could not have peace if you insisted that the unbelieving partner remain. Rather there would be ongoing strife.
- 2) Jay Adams: God doesn't want loose ends dangling; either you have a marriage or you don't.
- 3) Adversative δέ ("But God called us to live in peace," GWN) perhaps suggests the idea that the believer should do nothing to break the marriage: "As far as you, believer, are concerned, do nothing to destroy the peace of the marriage.

Can this verse be used to permit getting a divorce from a person who doesn't depart spatially? The verb *χωρίζω* does not speak to such a situation. *χωρίζω* has the idea of putting space between: "If he departs, let him depart." Would not make sense if it meant other than spatial separation, e.g., "If he keeps getting drunk and is physically abusing you and the children week after week, let him do it." But *ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις* does speak to such a situation. Qualitative: in the kinds of circumstances where it is impossible for the believer to hold the marriage together, e.g., need to protect one's own and/or one's family's welfare; refusal on part of unbelieving spouse to allow children to be taught about Jesus; refusal to have sexual relations; nonsupport—if *willful*, *unilateral* and *permanent* actions.

Willful: Not involuntary, e.g., military service, hospitalization, mental illness

Unilateral: Not that the believing spouse is without fault, but that the actions of the unbelieving spouse have made it impossible for the marriage to continue.

Permanent: Repeated attempts to remedy the situation have proven fruitless. The unbelieving spouse refuses to listen to admonition.

What if a believing spouse is guilty of such actions? Does this verse apply? Yes, if he/she persists in them in spite of proper admonition. Eventually he/she must be labeled a "pagan and a tax collector."

1 Co 7:16

τί γὰρ οἶδας ... εἰ ... σώσεις ... : "What do you know...if...you will gain...?" (Moule, 154. "It is uncertain whether the direct question implied is intended to expect the answer yes or no").

Accordingly, two possible interpretations:

- 1) The implied answer is: You don't know. ICC: "The chance of converting your heathen spouse is too small a compensation for a strained and disturbed life in which Christian serenity will be impossible."

NIV: "How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?"

- 2) The implied answer is: "It may be that you will save your husband/wife" (*τί γὰρ οἶδας* taken to mean "perhaps").

GWN: "For you, wife, what do you know—you may save your husband. Or you husband, what do you know—you may save your wife."

NEB: "Think of it: as a wife you may be your husband's salvation; as a husband you may be your wife's salvation."

1 Corinthians 7:39-40

Introduction:

Throughout this chapter Paul has been discussing the subject of marriage. The GWN nicely analyzes the verses we have covered as follows:

1) vv. 1-11: If You Are Married

2) vv. 12-16: If You Are Married to an Unbeliever

Then follows a section, verses 17-24, where Paul, using circumcision/uncircumcision and slavery/freedom as illustrations, encourages the Corinthians to remain in whatever state they are in, married or unmarried.

This, however, is not an inflexible rule, as he brings out in the final verses of the chapter. In verses 25-38 he speaks to the previously unmarried and in verses 39-40 he directs his attention to those previously married but who have lost their spouse through death.

1 Co 7:39

γυνή δέδεταί (perf., “is bound”) ἐφ’ ὅσον χρόνον χῆ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς - compare Ro 7:2

ἐὰν δὲ κοιμηθῇ ὁ ἀνὴρ - Protasis of a present general conditional sentence.

ἐλευθέρα - Opposite of δέδεταί. She is no longer bound to her husband, but is free to be remarried ᾧ θέλει, “to whomever she desires.”

μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ-

1) Some make this phrase say more than it really does, e.g.,

NIV: “But he must belong to the Lord.”

Fee: “Such a woman lives from such a radically different perspective and value system from that of a pagan husband that a ‘mixed’ marriage, where the ‘two become one,’ is simply unthinkable.”

2) Better is this statement of Barrett: “The last clause is usually taken to mean, ‘She may marry anyone she pleases, provided he is a Christian,’ but, as Lightfoot points out, this narrows Paul’s meaning—‘She must remember that she is a member of Christ’s body; and not forget her Christian duties and responsibilities’; similarly Schlatter. It is reasonable to add, that in view of the difficulties caused by mixed marriages, a widow exercising her right to second marriage would no doubt be wise to choose a Christian husband.”

1 Co 7:40

μακαριώτερα δὲ ἐστίν - “But she is happier,” apodosis of a future more vivid conditional sentence.

Protasis is ἐὰν οὕτως μείνη, “if she remains in the same way as she is, “ i. e., unmarried.

κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην - Paul makes it clear that to say it is better for the widow to remain unmarried is not a command, but an opinion of his. In some cases, in fact, he urges widows to remarry (cf. 1 Ti 5:11-14).

δοκῶ δὲ καὶ γὰρ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν - Perhaps spoken somewhat ironically as a response to those who claimed the authority of the Spirit for their opinions.

Romans 7:2-3

Introduction:

The subject under discussion in this section is not marriage. It is the Christian's relationship to the Law. Paul uses the death of a spouse and the subsequent freedom of the surviving spouse to remarry as an illustration of a Christian's death to the law and subsequent freedom to marry another—Christ. Paul does reiterate here, however, what he has written in 1 Corinthians about the right to remarry upon the death of a spouse.

Ro 7:2

δέδεται - Note the perfect: has been and continues to be bound (until death).

ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ - Present general: Whenever this happens, then that happens

κατήργηται - Again, a perfect (idea of past action that continues). Translate: "is released"

Ro 7:3

ζώντος τοῦ ἀνδρός (genitive absolute, temporal) - "while the husband is alive"

χρηματίσει - "to bear a name, be called" (gnomic future, *BD* 349,1).

ἐὰν γένηται ἐνδρὶ ἐτέρῳ Again, a present general conditional sentence. γίνομαι is a substitute for εἶμι with dative of possession: "to belong to a man" = "to marry a man" (*BD* 189,2).

Summary: Though Paul isn't talking about marriage in this passage, what he says about marriage is applicable: Death is the only *legitimate* end of a marriage. And with death comes the right of remarriage.

Summary of Paul on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

1. Upholds the permanency of marriage

Only death rightfully ends a marriage. The surviving spouse is then free to remarry (1 Co 7: 10, 11; Ro 7:2).

2. Requires the wrongfully separated

- to remain unmarried; or

- to be reconciled (1 Co 7: 11).

3. Recognizes that the sinful action (unilateral, willful, and permanent) of an unbelieving spouse can make it impossible for a marriage to continue, e.g., desertion or other such circumstances (1 Co 7:15).

In these kinds of circumstances the brother or sister "is not bound" (1 Co 7:15), i.e., to the spouse who has made it impossible for the marriage to continue and thus is free to remarry.

Summary of the Scriptures on Remarriage

1. Remarriage is permitted
 - A. Upon the death of a spouse (Ro 7:2-3; 1 Co 7:39-40);
 - B. On the part of the “innocent” party following a divorce (Mt 19:9; 1 Co 7:15), provided there are no legal restrictions remaining.
2. Remarriage is not permitted on the part of either spouse if they divorced each other on non-Scriptural grounds by mutual consent and the possibility of reconciliation exists (1 Co 7: 10, 11).
3. What about remarriage on the part of the “guilty” party? We have no direct word on this in Scriptures. The answer to this question revolves around repentance and appropriate fruits of repentance (Jn 15:5, “...*will* bear much fruit”; Lk 3:8, “...fruit in keeping with repentance”).
 - A. No code in Scripture that specifies for every sin the exact form which fruit of repentance must take. Some broad principles (Armin Schuetze): Fruit of repentance is
 - 1) To *desist* from the sin over which one has repented
 Jn 8: 11 - “Go now and leave your life of sin”
 - 2) To *restore*, if possible, what sin has ruined
 Lk 19:8 - “If I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount”
 - 3) To *amend* one’s sinful life, to replace evil with good
 Lk 19:8 - “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor”
 - 4) To *do all to the glory of God*
 1 Co 10:31 – “Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”
 - B. Remarriage of the “guilty” party, therefore, would be permitted
 - 1) if there is repentance; and
 - 2) if the bond cannot be re-established because of
 - a) death of former spouse; or
 - b) remarriage of former spouse; or
 - c) other circumstances which make it no longer possible to reestablish the bond, e.g., permanent refusal of the “innocent” spouse to re-establish the bond.
 - C. Remarriage of the “guilty” party is not permitted

- 1) if there is no repentance; or
 - 2) even if there is repentance, but there remains the possibility of reconciliation.
- D. Luther's suggestion: That "the adulterer may betake himself to a far country and there remarry if he is unable to remain continent.... Between two evils one is always the lesser, in this case allowing the adulterer to remarry in a distant land in order to avoid fornication. And I think he would be safer also in the sight of God" (LW 45:32f).
- E. Fritz: "The guilty person may not marry as long as the innocent party remains unmarried and there is reason to believe that a reconciliation can be effected; for it is in the very nature of the case that a guilty husband, for instance, if he is penitent, ought to prefer to return to his original wife rather than marry another. However, after the innocent party has procured a divorce, not being willing again to live with the guilty party, or after the marriage or the death of the innocent party, a pastor may perform the marriage ceremony for the guilty party in a divorce case, provided, of course, that such a person be truly penitent" (John Fritz, *Pastoral Theology*, p 173; cf. also *The Counseling Shepherd*, pp 240,241)

PART TWO: DISCIPLINING AND COUNSELING THOSE WITH TROUBLED MARRIAGES

Introduction

In this section we want to take a brief look at three things: how to get people to come to you; marital counseling methodology; and the application of church discipline.

How to Get People to Come to You

- A. Barriers
1. Pride
 2. Incorrect assessment of the situation
 - a. Not a problem
 - b. Not my problem
 - c. Not a big problem
 - d. Too big of a problem
 3. Fear of spousal reprisal
 4. Rejection of God's will
 5. Guilt
 6. Perceptions of the pastor
 - a. Too "other-worldly"
 - b. Uncaring
 - c. Judgmental
 - d. Too busy
 - e. Unskilled in counseling
 - f. Prejudiced
 - g. Loose-mouthed
 - h. Too much of a "buddy"
 - i. Not enough of a husband
 - j. Incompatible personality

B. Overcoming the Barriers

1. Long-term

a. Pastoral “image”

- 1) Be approachable, as you will be if such “Good Shepherd qualities” as compassion, concern, care, warmth, empathy are visible
- 2) Be non-judgmental
- 3) Be transparent
- 4) Be available
- 5) Love your spouse
- 6) Keep a confidence
- 7) Maintain a shepherd/sheep distinction
- 8) Demonstrate a professional demeanor

b. Regular home visitation

c. Public invitations, e.g., in newsletters, Bible classes, pre-marital counseling, premembership interviews

d. Publicize development of counseling skills, e.g., quotes from books, summary of classes/seminars you’ve attended

e. Develop referral resources for difficult situations

2. Short-term

a. Watch for signs of trouble

- 1) Change in personality
- 2) Declining worship/communion participation
- 3) Inappropriate public behavior, e.g., put-downs, arguing
- 4) Signs of physical abuse

b. Make opportunities to approach people when the signs indicate they’re having trouble

- 1) The chance meetings
- 2) The “business” phone
- 3) The drop-in visit

c. Second-hand information?

- 1) Following Mt 18:15ff, encourage the source to speak to the couple
- 2) Keep your own eyes and ears open

Counseling Methodology

A. Purpose (cf. *The Counseling Shepherd*, pp 14-24)): To affect change

1. Growth in faith that leads to eternal salvation
2. Growth in the use and application of the Word of G
3. Growth in living the Christian life

B. Tools (cf. *The Counseling Shepherd*, pp 27-49)

1. Word and Sacrament
2. Prayer
3. Reason

C. Separate or Joint Sessions?

1. Best in general for husband and wife to come together. Advantages:
 - a. You will hear both spouses' perspective on their problems
 - b. You will hear both sides of the story of particular incidents
 - c. You will observe how the couple relates to one another
 - d. Helps to keep you from taking sides
 - e. Both will hear suggestions for improvement and can begin working on them together
 - f. Both hear the same Word of God
 - g. Helps prevent one spouse from thinking that the counselor and counselee have formed an alliance because one spouse talked to the counselor first
2. Separate counseling
 - a. Necessary if one spouse refuses to come (but don't give up on that spouse too quickly)
 - b. Possibly advisable after joint meetings
 - 1) If one spouse is causing problems, e.g., outbursts of anger, which hinder progress
 - 2) If one spouse doesn't let the other speak
 - 3) If individual concerns arise which call for separate counseling, e.g., family of origin problems (sexual abuse, alcoholism, physical abuse, etc.)
 - 4) If past relationships are affecting one spouse (The other spouse might be jealous and could not deal with such conversations)
 - 5) If there are shame issues on the part of one spouse, e.g., incest, drugs, abortion, and he/she finds it difficult to open up on front of the other spouse
 - 6) If you need to determine who wants counseling and who doesn't

D. Scheduling Sessions

1. Time per session: 1 to 1 1/2 hours (so WLCFS)
2. Frequency: If a crisis situation, once or more a week for perhaps 3-4 weeks and then 1 to 2 times a month, depending on the situation
3. Total number of sessions: WLCFS average is 14-20 times per case, spread out over 4-5 months
4. Fitting marital counseling into one's busy schedule
 - a. The "I am available 24 hours everyday" can lead to many problems personally and professionally
 - 1) Burnout
 - 2) Neglect of family
 - 3) Neglect of other clergy duties
 - b. Schedule sessions at reasonable times and in neutral places
 - 1) Helps to ward off sexual dangers
 - 2) At times might have to say, "I can't meet then since I'm doing something with my family." We should be models for our counselees.
 - 3) It is not counter-productive for people to make some sacrifices, e.g., taking off early from work, to participate in a counseling session

E. Uncovering the Problems

1. Ask the couple to identify what they feel is wrong
 - a. Ask the husband and wife to describe specific examples and incidents of conflict
 - b. Helps you to understand not only the sources of dissension, but also the accompanying feelings of rejection, anger, hurt, frustration, and low self-esteem
2. Have the couple define their terms, since each person may have a different definition. This will aid in understanding
3. You might have to identify one issue and proceed to examine that one in detail

4. You might want to write up an assessment after the initial joint session and ask the couple if you have correctly summarized their problems.
5. You might want to list the problems they have identified and then ask them to draw up a priority list
6. Since some couples have difficulty in putting their problems into words and others might be embarrassed, an option might be to have each person separately fill out an inventory sheet that will help clarify areas of conflict. This may offer more complete initial information. Cf. the WLCFS *Checklist* on page 31.

Note: C through E in the above outline is a summary of a class presentation given by Ronald Ash, in consultation with WLCFS, for a Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary 1990 summer quarter course on “Dealing with Divorce in the Parish.”

Applying Church Discipline

A. Its Purpose

1. Nothing less than the salvation of a soul
 - a. Mt 18:15 - “If he listens to you, you have won your brother over”
 - b. Jas 5:19,20 - “My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner away from his error will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins”
2. As such it is not optional
 - a. Vs. the temptation to turn the other way and hope the problem disappears
 - b. The Scriptures
 - 1) 2 Sa 12:7 - Nathan to David, “You are the man”
 - 2) 1 Co 5:4,5 - “When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord”
 - 3) Gal 2:14 - “I [Paul] said to Peter in front of them all, ‘You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?’”

B. When It Is Called For

1. When a sinful action is being contemplated or practiced

Examples:

 - a. Mutual agreement to end a marriage
 - b. Desertion
 - c. Adultery
 - d. Abuse, physical and/or emotional
 - e. Refusal to practice sexual relations
 - f. Non-support
2. Both need to be disciplined, if they are jointly determined to end the marriage on non-scriptural grounds
3. The “guilty” party needs to be disciplined
 - a. Doesn’t assume 100%-0% guilt (“The pastor must help both individually to discover their own guilt and to work through repentance with an eye toward patience, forgiveness, hope, and change” (Mueller-Kraus, *Pastoral Theology*, St. Louis: Concordia, 1990)
 - b. Does assume the need to discipline the one who from all outward appearances is the primary cause of the problem, e.g., wants to leave the marriage, has committed adultery, is making it impossible by his/her actions for the marriage to continue

C. Methodology

1. In general, no differently from any other act of church discipline, following Matthew 18:15ff; although the “innocent” spouse could well be involved, with marital counseling and disciplining going on at the same time
2. Manner: With meekness and humility
Ga 6:1 - “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently”
3. Means: Law and Gospel (Goal is first repentance, then restoration of the marriage)
 - a. The law effects contrition, sorrow over sin
 - 1) Confession = taking responsibility for sin, accepting ownership of it
 - 2) The first part of repentance
 - b. Second part of repentance: Absolution through proclamation of the go
 - 1) A proclamation without conditions
 - 2) A proclamation that works faith to appropriate forgiveness
4. Should Holy Communion be withheld during the disciplining process?
 - a. Holy Communion is a means of grace
 - 1) A blessing for one who desires to do God’s will, but is struggling with the flesh
 - 2) A curse for one who is stubbornly refusing to repent
 - b. We need to distinguish between weakness: and unwillingness
 - c. The matter of offence cannot be ignored

D. Situations

1. A husband commits adultery and then repents of his sin. The wife forgives him but refuses to take him back. Can both now be members in good standing of the same congregation?
2. A wife decides to leave her husband on non-scriptural grounds. Upon hearing of this, her pastor tries to make an appointment to see her. Rather than allowing him to do this, she sends a letter severing her ties with the church. What should/can be done now?
3. A husband and wife have undergone much marital counseling and yet are finding it “impossible” to keep living together. They know that divorce is wrong, but they feel they have no other choice since they are “destroying” each other’s lives. Both promise they will remain celibate upon the divorce. What do you do?
4. A wife leaves her husband on non-scriptural grounds. He wants her to come back. She refuses—for a protracted period of time. The pastor attempts—unsuccessfully—to lead her to repent and to return to her spouse. In time the husband gives up on her and files for a divorce. The wife then says she has changed her mind. She wants to be reconciled. But then he refuses. Now what?
5. To keep peace in the congregation the board of elders will not support the pastor in his determination to practice church discipline in cases of divorce. What should the pastor do?

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE CHECKLIST

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

What problems or concerns do you plan to discuss with your counselor? Please read through the list and rate the severity of each problem. If the item is not a problem for you, circle "0."

A. Please circle one number for each item:

	NOT A PROBLEM	VERY MILD PROBLEM	MILD PROBLEM	MODERATE PROBLEM	SEVERE PROBLEM	VERY SEVERE PROBLEM
Financial/ Employment problems	0	1	2	3	4	5
Physical health or handicap	0	1	2	3	4	5
Misuse of drug or alcohol	0	1	2	3	4	5
Spiritual concerns	0	1	2	3	4	5
Feelings of depression, sadness, anxiety or loneliness	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual concerns	0	1	2	3	4	5
Problems between parents and children	0	1	2	3	4	5
Threatened or actual abuse or violence	0	1	2	3	4	5
Problems associated with aging	0	1	2	3	4	5
Anger or problems with temper	0	1	2	3	4	5
Unusual fears	0	1	2	3	4	5
Unplanned pregnancy concerns	0	1	2	3	4	5
Separation or divorce	0	1	2	3	4	5
Problems with spouse/ partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
Trouble relating to others	0	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of self-confidence	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual abuse	0	1	2	3	4	5
Eating problems	0	1	2	3	4	5
School related problems	0	1	2	3	4	5

Other, specify	0	1	2	3	4	5
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B. How would you rate your total problem situation?

Very Mild	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Very Severe
1	2	3	4	5

PART THREE: MINISTERING TO THE DIVORCED AND THEIR FAMILIES

Introduction

The Counseling Shepherd (p 55) reports that “about half of all first marriages in the United States are broken by divorce” and that “about one-third of all divorced persons remarry,” many with children, producing “blended” families. Of all children born in America in a given year, 45 % will live with only one parent at some time before age 18. Two of every three teenage suicides come from broken homes. Twelve million children under age 18 have parents who are divorced. Our congregations have their share of such “fractured” and “blended” families.

While one profile certainly does not fit all, and therefore divorced members and their families need to be ministered to according to their individual needs, it is helpful to have at least a general profile of these groups. Then we can design a strategy to help us best minister to them.

A Profile of Divorced Members and Their Families

What problems do the following groups face, problems which may not be unique to them, but which may well affect them more than they do husbands and wives whose marriages are intact and children who are living with both parents?

- A. The Divorced Person

- B. The Single Parent

- C. The Child of Divorced Parents

Congregational Support of the Divorced and Their Families

In view of these general descriptions of the divorced and their families, list some ways by which these groups might be ministered to in the congregation.

- A. Through Personal Ministration on the Part of the Pastor

- B. Through the School and Its Teachers

- C. Through the Worship Service

D. Through Bible Classes

E. Through Members of the Congregation

F. Through Congregational Programs

PART FOUR: PRACTICING PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

Introduction

Realizing that, as the saying goes, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, if it is most helpful for a congregation to devote time and energy to building up the marriages in the congregation and to work at instilling in members a healthy respect for what God says in his Word about marriage, divorce, and remarriage. In what follows we will look at three ways by which a congregation can be practicing preventive medicine: teaching about marriage, divorce, and remarriage in youth and adult confirmation classes; premarital counseling; and congregational marriage enrichment programs.

Teaching About Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in Youth and Adult Confirmation Classes

A. An Outline for Adult Instruction on the Sixth Commandment

(This outline and the following one on youth instruction were prepared by Michael Dietz for the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary 1990 Summer Quarter course on “Dealing with Divorce in the Parish. “ He lists two goals, especially in adult classes: to create a healthy respect for what God says about marriage, divorce, and remarriage, and an acute awareness of the importance of commitment in marriage.)

I. What Does God Say?

A. God instituted marriage

1. As a union, of one man and one woman
 - a. Genesis 1:26-28
 - b. Genesis 2:18-24
 - c. Matthew 19:4-6
 - d. Mark 10:6-9
2. As a permanent, lifelong commitment which only *He* has the right to end
 - a. Matthew 19:6
 - b. Romans 7:2-3
 - c. 1 Corinthians 7:39

B. God has a three-fold purpose for marriage

1. Companionship - Genesis 2:18-24
2. Children (a blessing) - Genesis 1:28
3. Chastity (sexual purity) - 1 Corinthians 7:2-9, 6:18-20

C. God regulates marriage

1. He assigns responsibilities to the husband

- a. Love for your wife - Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19
- b. Honor your wife - 1 Peter 3:7
- c. Provide for your household - 1 Timothy 5:8
- d. Forgive your wife - Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 18:32-35
2. He assigns responsibilities to the wife
 - a. Submit to your husband - Ephesians 5:21-24
 - b. Take care of your household - Proverbs 31:27; 1 Timothy 5:14
 - c. Forgive your husband - Ephesians 4:32
3. God forbids the misuse of sex
 - a. In actions
 - 1) Pre-marital sex - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
 - 2) Extra-marital sex - Genesis 39:6-12
 - 3) Homosexuality - 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
 - b. In words
 - 1) Off-color stories, jokes - Ephesians 5:3-4
 - 2) "Four-letter" words
 - c. In thoughts - Matthew 5:28
4. God hates divorce
 - a. Malachi 2:16
 - b. Matthew 19:9
 - c. Marriage is sinfully ended
 - 1) When a spouse engages in sexual intimacy outside of marriage - Matthew 5:32
 - 2) When a spouse willfully, unilaterally, and permanently deserts his/her spouse - 1 Corinthians 7:15
5. God permits remarriage
 - a. When He has dissolved the marriage in death - Romans 7:2-3
 - b. When a spouse has been the victim of wrongful divorce - I Corinthians 7:15
 - c. When the guilty part is penitent and reconciliation is no longer possible - Luke 3:8

II. What Does the Christian Do?

A. Out of love for Christ submits to God's Word

1. Remembering that his/her body is a temple of the Holy Spirit - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
2. Striving to keep him/herself pure - I Timothy 5:22

B. Repents of sins of which he/she has been guilty

1. Confessing sin - Psalm 32:5; James 5:16
2. Being assured of and trusting in God's forgiveness - 2 Samuel 12:1-13

C. With the help of God makes changes for the better

1. Ephesians 4:22-24
2. Romans 6:13

III. For Discussion. Agree or disagree?

1. Living together is permissible as long as there is no sexual intimacy.
2. When a husband and wife are having problems, it's a good idea to consult with their pastor.
3. AIDS is God's punishment upon homosexuality.
4. Since both husband and wife are sinners, there is never an "innocent party" in a divorce.

B. An Outline for Youth Instruction (Number references are to questions in the Catechism with the assumption that use would be made of the passages listed under these questions)

#87-89 What Is Marriage?

1. Marriage is a lifelong union of one man and one woman who have distinct roles
2. God blesses marriage with a loving companionship, sexual happiness, and children

#90-93 What Does God Forbid in the Sixth Commandment?

1. God forbids divorce, sex outside of marriage, and homosexuality
2. God forbids impure words and thoughts

#94-98 How Does God Want the Sixth Commandment Kept?

1. God reminds us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit
2. God wants us to be pure in thoughts, words, and deeds
3. God wants husband and wife to love and honor each other
4. God wants us to be motivated by love for Jesus

Pre-Marital Counseling**A. Some Questions for Consideration**

1. What are the objectives of pre-marital counseling?
2. What is a reasonable number of sessions? What should be the length of each session?
3. What should be included in the content of the sessions?
4. What presentation methodology is most suitable, e.g., lecture, prior (or follow-up) homework assignments, discussion?
5. Is pre-marital counseling best done by group or by couple?

B. A Sample Pre-Marriage Discussion Guide (copyright by James Aderman; reprinted by permission)**Marriage Enrichment****A. Bible class series on marriage, family, etc. - Suggestions?****B. Film series - Suggestions?****C. Books - Suggestions?****D. A Marriage Retreat**

(Excerpted from a presentation by Fred Piepenbrink for a Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary 1991 Summer Quarter course on "Dealing with Divorce in the Parish")

OBJECTIVES:

1. Strengthen individual marriages
2. Christian fellowship

POSSIBLE ELEMENTS

LECTURES — pastors, teachers, members, couples

TOPICS — “Roles in marriage,” “Communication,” “Love and Submission,”
“Speaking the Truth in Love” - Others?

VIDEOS —

MIXERS —

WORSHIP —Possibly to include a renewal of marriage vows

BREAKOUTS (for small group discussion) —

ROLE PLAYING —

HUSBAND/WIFE DISCUSSION —

Example #1:

On a 3 X 5 card write down: 1. The three things which cause my partner the most stress/concern 2. The three most important dreams for my partner are

Example #2:

Deepening communication and listening skills: Take turns as a couple completing the following sentences. The husband answers question #1 and the wife listens. Then the wife repeats back in her own words what she thought her husband said.

Then the wife answers #1, the husband listens and then repeats back what she has said. Then go on to #2 and repeat the process.

1. I feel closest to you when...
2. I feel distant from you when...
3. What I really feel about myself is...
4. What I think God wants me to do with my life is...
5. The most immediate thing I can do to enhance our communication is...
6. Sometimes I have trouble sharing my feelings with you because...

Example #3:

Share with your mate one of the happiest times of your relationship or something that you felt you handled well together.

Example #4:

Take about 30 minutes to compose and write a love letter to your beloved. You do not necessarily have to be together for this part of the exercise, but you do need to establish a time and place to exchange letters and read them quietly.

HINTS from those who have done it

1. The presenters need to be good speakers and well organized.
2. Recruitment requires personal contact.
3. Nice to be away from home, but not too far.

4. Focus on and emphasis one topic rather than trying to cover everything.
5. Allow for some free time, e.g., a portion of Saturday afternoon, Saturday evening.
6. Allow sufficient time for couples to focus just on their marriage.
7. Purpose is to reinforce already known truths. You aren't going to tell them anything new.
8. Some ground rules:
 - a. Use no confrontation tactics of any kind. Confrontation has its use in therapy, but this isn't therapy.
 - b. No exchange of opinions, but share experiences.
 - c. Do not diagnose or analyze each other.