

**Question: What if someone has been married twice before and is in their 3rd marriage. They have been terribly disturbed by the situation. They are truly sorry for the past mistakes. The question is “Do you think they are still going to heaven?” The belief has been that if they are still “living” in sin, and will not get out of it, then “No” they will not be going to heaven. Is there still hope?**

The Bible says that the institution of marriage was created by God (Genesis 2:21-25) as part of the whole creation. God’s Word is our source of authority for defining marriage and setting the boundaries for marriage relationships. The Bible says that God intends for marriage to be a monogamous, life-long, loving relationship between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6; Hebrews 13:4). Marriage is the highest of all human relationships, provided by God as the best environment for relational intimacy (Genesis 2:18 & 25) and child rearing (Genesis 1:27-28). The love between a husband and a wife is to be an illustration of the love and faithfulness of God and his people (Malachi 2:13-16; Ephesians 5:22-33).

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), but because of the influence of sin in the world (Jesus called it “the hardness of your hearts” in Matthew 19:8), the Bible makes some concessions for divorce and remarriage. The Scriptures give two justifiable reasons for divorce:

adultery (Matthew 19:9) and abandonment (I Corinthians 7:15).

Divorce is allowable in the case of marital unfaithfulness because the marriage covenant has been broken, but this is a concession and not a command. God still hates divorce, and if at all possible, if the unfaithful spouse shows signs of repentance and a willingness to recommit, we encourage the innocent party to seek to forgive and be receptive to the restoration of trust.

There are at least five scenarios under which a person who has been previously married may remarry:

The former spouse has passed away (I Corinthians 7:39 and Romans 7:23)

The divorce occurred prior to salvation (II Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Cor 6:9-11)

The former spouse has remarried (Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Matthew 19:8-9)

Abandonment by the unbelieving former spouse (I Corinthians 7:12-15)

Adultery broke the marriage covenant (Matthew 5:31-32, 19:9)

When the one desiring to remarry was the guilty party, there must first be signs of repentance and a desire to reconcile with his or her former spouse. If the former spouse is unable or unwilling to reconcile, then after prayer and godly counsel we may allow the person to remarry.

We recognize that these biblical parameters do not allow divorce under other circumstances where divorce may seem warranted. The Bible does make a distinction between physical separation and divorce (I Corinthians 7:5), so we would counsel people in certain difficult situations that physical separation may be warranted until a godly counselor advises otherwise.

Those who have remarried outside of the biblical boundaries need to repent of their pattern of divorcing and remain faithful to the one whom they are currently married. (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). The grace of Christ can be extended to those who have been divorced for unbiblical reasons. Those who have made wrong mistakes in the past cannot undo their mistakes, but they are able to be faithful to Christ in the situation in which they currently find themselves.

Divorce and Remarriage cannot be equated to blasphemy, which the Bible states is the only non-forgivable sin. Mark 3:28–29, Matthew 12:31–32, and Luke 12:10.