

Redwater Restorer

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness..." (Matthew 3:3)

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Honorable Marriage

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Redwater
Church of Christ

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Many religious bodies have chosen to turn a blind eye to the guidelines God has established concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage. The true New Testament church will uphold honorable marriage. The New Testament says, "*Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*" (Hebrews 13:4). In our day as we see the multitude of breakdowns in marriages and homes, the New Testament principles need to be renewed and declared. Many of the ills of our generation can be traced to the failing of marriages. Christians have contended all along that this is a basic problem, but few seem to listen. Now a few government leaders are pointing this out to be a basic problem that needs to be addressed, and they, too, are being ridiculed by liberal politicians and a biased media. Marriage, and the home resulting from a sound marriage, is a basic buildingblock of a healthy nation as well as an essential ingredient of the Kingdom of God.

Marriage is honorable because God ordained it. It is not a mere convenient arrangement invented by man. God created the man and the woman to fit into marriage (Genesis 2:18-24). Jesus Christ exalts marriage, though He himself was never married. Through the apostle Paul, He compared marriage to Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-32). Specifically, He approves of the marriage relationship when He said that the marriage bed is "undefiled." The physical intimacy in

marriage is clean and wholesome. Those married under God's approval must give all diligence to see that their marriage remains undefiled.

Though physical intimacy within the confines of the marriage bed is clean and wholesome, outside of marriage, physical intimacy is defiling, sordid and unclean. God will judge (condemn) those who engage in whoremongering (fornication) and adultery. Those who engage in sex before marriage are **pornous** -- whoremongers (fornicators). Included are those couples who decide to live together without or before marriage. They cry, "But isn't it all right as long as we love each other?" "Love" is not permission for sex. God placed it in marriage. Hopefully, love will accompany marriage, but love alone is no excuse for engaging in sex! Genuine love considers what is best for the subject of that love. The emotion that encourages one to persuade his friend to engage in premarital intimacy is selfish lust. What is best is what is honorable and that involves marriage before sex, not sex before marriage!

Those who engage in unauthorized sex after marriage, that is, with someone who is not their husband or wife are **moichous** - adulterers. Adultery defiles the marriage bed. It destroys homes. It abuses children. It condemns the soul (Galatians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9). The Lord ordained that each one should have his own wife, her own husband, and be loyal to them for life. If both love the Lord, respect His

Honorable Marriage (Cont.)

law, use the scriptures as their pattern for life, and try hard, they can and will remain faithful to each other until death parts them. They will never become guilty of adultery. The Lord has spoken clearly concerning the consequences of adultery. *“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery”* (Matthew 19:9). However, many choose to ignore this text, and others, to their own destruction. I was privileged to hear the late Bill Jackson preach in Austin, Texas, on this topic. In his lesson he quoted Matthew 19:9 and then said the following: “Well, somebody says explain that verse to me. All right. I’ll explain it. Matthew 19:9 means that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery. But someone else says ‘analyze that verse for me,’ All right. I’ll analyze it. An analysis of Matthew 19:9 shows that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.” Then Bill said, “Matthew 19:9 doesn’t need explaining, it needs believing!” How true!

What are the guidelines and limitations established by Hebrews 13:4, Matthew 19:9 and others?

1) It does not authorize the re-marriage of a person who divorced his spouse other than for fornication. This type of marriage is not honorable at all. According to Matthew 19:6 God did not even recognize the dissolution of the first marriage. This is why the second relationship is adultery. He is still bound to the original spouse. God never released him from his covenant.

2) It does not authorize the marriage of a person to another who has been divorced. “Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Matthew 5:32). Such a marriage is not honorable. The only exception to this is, one is free to be married to a person who put away his spouse for the spouse’s fornication (Matthew 19:9). Otherwise, they would be living in adultery and an adulterous relationship cannot be honorable.

3) It does not authorize the marriage of the person put away for fornication. Matthew 19:9 expressly authorizes the innocent party to remarry, but never authorizes the guilty party to remarry. Besides, if the one who marries the guilty party commits adultery, how could the guilty party himself be innocent? Any marriage involving the person, “put away for fornication” could not be honorable.

4) It does not authorize homosexual “marriages.” The homosexual act itself is an abomination (Romans 1:26,27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10). How could any kind of “marriage arrangement” of such be approved, or even possible. Rather than honorable, the Bible says that those who engage in such activities “dishonor their own bodies between themselves” (Romans 1:24). Homosexual “marriages” are not only not honorable, they are dishonorable.

Marriage is honorable in all when it is contracted by parties eligible to marry. And marriage is an honorable estate among all races, peoples and nations of the earth. God’s law governs them all.

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