

# Rebuilding a Marriage

## An Alternative to Divorce

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### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this study on Rebuilding a Marriage. This booklet is a supplement to the NYM Family Studies series.

In the past few years, many church leaders and Christian missionaries have been very concerned about the breakdown in families. They have seen a great need for Bible teaching in this area. A number of pastors, church leaders and missionaries started specific teaching on this subject. In 1977 they began putting their teaching together in a set of lessons that everyone could use.

Our society has seen a rise in divorce as a means of solving marriage problems. This booklet was written to impress couples with the serious consequences of divorce and to encourage troubled couples to find constructive ways to solve their problems.

### Rebuilding a Marriage: An Alternative to Divorce

*What God has joined together, let not man separate* (Matthew 19:6).

A generation ago, people talked about divorce in hushed tones. It was a social disgrace to have someone in the family who was divorced. Now that has changed. Divorce is common and accepted almost everywhere.

Yet divorce is a tragedy. Through the prophet Malachi, God calls it violence (Malachi 2:16). It does great damage to the social life of a country, to marriage and to children. It causes pain, insecurity, guilt, fear and heartache among the children in a divorced family. It gives those same children an unhealthy view of marriage, making a lot of them not want to get married themselves.

Divorce is not just in non-Christian families. Sadly, Christian families are also being hurt by divorce. Christians discuss divorce a lot, taking different viewpoints. Some say that it is all right for Christians to divorce and remarry. Others say that it is wrong. This issue is surrounded by strong feelings and heartache.

The purpose of this book is to present scripture on the questions of divorce. The authors have attempted to draw conclusions from the important scriptures dealing with divorce. This is done to help church leaders and their congregations find direction on this issue.

The stand this booklet takes is: 1) If a couple has difficulty in marriage, they should work on solving the

problems because God is deeply grieved by divorce; 2) If a couple is divorced and not remarried they should work on getting their marriage back together, because this pleases God more than for them to find other partners.

Many complicated relationships arise in situations surrounding divorce. This booklet does not cover the question of the person who is divorced and remarried. The local church must deal with this situation. Christians who are helping people caught in difficult relationships must find God's way to apply God's principles to each situation.

### GOD'S PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

A marriage begins with high hopes. A wedding is held because a man and a woman love each other and want to live with each other. They promise to love each other until death. They have great plans for what they want to do together: plans for having children, plans for getting a house, plans for places they want to visit.

Years later those hopes are often gone. In their place are anger, bitterness and fighting. The couple does not talk together, plan together or work together. The marriage is full of problems. The man and woman who said they would love each other until death now want to leave each other. They feel that their problems are too big for them. They want to separate or divorce.

Is divorce the way to solve the problems? Does God agree with divorce?

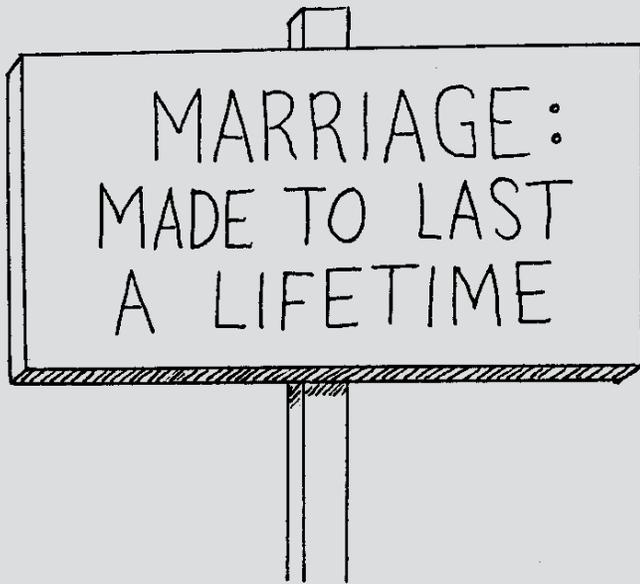
God's will is that marriage be for life. That is one meaning of Genesis 2:23-24.

*And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

Jesus reminded his listeners about that first marriage. In Matthew 19:5-6, He said that the married man and woman were no longer two people. After marriage they become one. Then He said, "*What God has joined together, let not man separate.*"

God's will for marriage is that there be one woman for one man. He made Adam and Eve to be together. When a marriage breaks apart, it is man's doing, not God's.

## An Elder Speaks: "Made for Marriage"



The Creator made marriage. Men and women were designed for marriage from the beginning. Marriage is part of the operating instructions to make life work right for people.

When men and women live together without being married, it is somewhat like trying to run a car motor on stove oil. Life just doesn't work right. A look at couples you know proves that.

A lot of marriages don't work very well either, but at least they have one thing right.

The Creator isn't the only one who knows that marriage is the way men and woman should live together. All the peoples and nations all over the world believe in marriage. They know that their kind of people need marriage. They know that their people, whatever the tribe, can't be happy without marriage. It is for the good of everyone. It is not just a rule somebody made up that is hard to follow.

Why did the Creator invent marriage, and why do elders from all over the world believe in it?

For one thing, the Creator and the elders know that men and women change as they go through life. They know that hard times will come that will make nearly every couple want to leave each other. Marriage is a promise to stay together even when the hard times come, even when the man and woman change.

Before they start the marriage, they say to each other, "I love you so much that I promise I will never leave you, no matter what happens, no matter how much we change the way we feel."

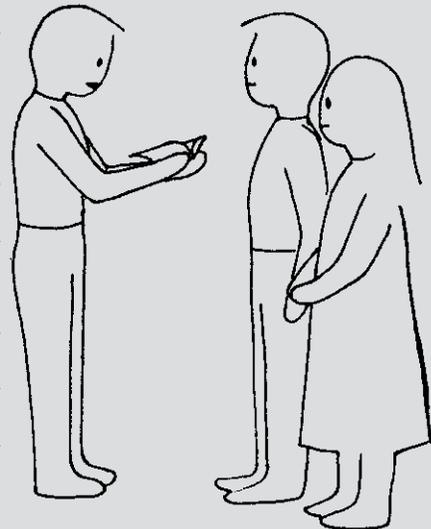
Nowadays, lots of people think marriage should last as long as the couple still feel that they want to stay together. If the feelings change, however, they should get a divorce.

They don't understand that people who love each other get married **because** they know their feelings will change. They get married because they want to promise **ahead of time** that they will stay faithful to each other when the hard times come and they want to split up.

They know they need that kind of promise to help them stay together. Wise elders from all over the world understand that marriage is to help couples stay together when they don't want to stay together. When there is a desire to separate, the couple isn't thinking right and they need help in keeping their marriage together.

In the end, divorce hurts both the man and the woman more than staying married. The Creator knew man and woman need marriage to keep them from hurting each other, hurting their children and hurting their friends and family.

So, marriage is for the good of the human race. Divorce tears down something that is good for couples, for children and for family groups. Divorce hurts, and God says He hates it.



## GOD'S VIEW OF DIVORCE

Malachi, God's prophet 400 years before Jesus came to earth, had some hard words to say to his people.

*And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying; so He does not regard the offering any more, nor receive it with good will from your hands. Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. "For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it*

*covers one's garment with violence," says the Lord of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously" (Malachi 2:13-16).*



The people to whom Malachi was speaking were going through a lot of trouble. They were crying out to the Lord, complaining to God. Even though they were making sacrifices at God's altar they were not getting any help for their trouble. They were asking why God was not answering their cries for help.

Malachi said that God did not help them out of their troubles because they were not pleasing Him. These men were divorcing their wives. God hates divorce. It is an act of violence. God's plan is for a husband and wife to stay together. They made a vow to each other to stay with each other as long as they live. When they break up, they break that promise. God made them one in their marriage. God's desire is that from that marriage the man and wife would raise children to fear and honour God.

God desires that the husband and wife keep youthful love alive in their marriage. That is why Malachi encouraged husbands and wives to watch over the spirit of their marriage. Even as they grow old in years, their love for each other will stay young and fresh.

The New Testament also teaches that God intends marriage to be for life.

*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 released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man (Romans 7:2-3).*

*A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.*

*(1 Corinthians 7:39).*

Only death can break the promise made in marriage.

John and Martha were a couple in middle age. They had four children, all of whom were grown. Their youngest son was eighteen and had just left home to work in another town.

John had worked hard and provided a home for his wife and children. He had spent most of his time at his work and with his friends. Martha had kept busy with the home, working part time at various jobs around the village. She had her friends too, with whom she spent her spare time.

After their youngest son left home, John and Martha realized that they didn't have much holding them together and drifted apart. They argued quite a bit whenever they were together. John got interested in another woman and moved out to live with her. Then he and Martha divorced.

About the same time, their eldest daughter became a Christian and began praying for her parents. God began to work, and through a number of miraculous circumstances both John and Martha accepted Christ as Savior. God worked in their lives and John left the other woman with whom he was living. He and Martha saw that it would honour God if they put their marriage back together. They sought help from a Christian counsellor, who showed them how to solve some of their old problems. They were remarried to each other and are now enjoying God's blessings in working for a church mission.

Their life is a testimony that divorce is not the answer to marriage problems. The answer is in seeking God's help and in obeying Him.



## OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING ON DIVORCE

In the Old Testament, God gave strict rules about sexual sins that weaken or destroy a marriage. If a husband or wife were found in adultery they were put to death by stoning (Leviticus 20:10).

The Old Testament also has the following rule about fornication, which is sexual sin before marriage.\*

*If a man marries a woman and then dislikes her because he thinks she is not a virgin, then the elders of the city are called in. If the woman proves she was a virgin before her marriage, then the man must keep her as his wife for life. But if it is proved that she was not a virgin, that she had sinned sexually before marriage, then she should be stoned by the elders of the city and the husband would be free to marry another.*

*(paraphrased from Deuteronomy 22:13–21).*

Death, not divorce, was God's law for sexual sins. But in Deuteronomy 24:1–4 God allowed Moses to make a law permitting a man to divorce his wife if he found uncleanness in her and was displeased with her. Many years later the Pharisees, religious leaders of the Jews, asked Jesus what He thought about this law on divorce. Jesus spoke very clearly to them.

*The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female.' And said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.'" He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." (Matthew 19:3–5, 8).*

Jesus did not argue about Moses' law on divorce. Instead He pointed those men back to God's original purpose for marriage. God's desire for marriage was that the man and woman become one. God has joined them together and no one is to split them apart.

Jesus clearly pointed out that the permission given by Moses was not part of God's original plan. That permission was given only because men had hard hearts. They did not want to obey God. They did not want to live together with the wives they had first married, the wives with whom God had joined them together.

Jesus was offering the Jewish leaders a new way of living. People in the new kingdom that Jesus was starting would not live under the old laws of Moses. Instead they would live with hearts that are made soft by Jesus. They would live in love and trust, in the way God first planned for marriage.

## NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON DIVORCE

Jesus gave these two important teachings on divorce.

*But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except for fornication causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.*

*(Matthew 5:32 KJV).*

*And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery (Matthew 19:9 KJV).*

In these two verses Jesus was speaking especially to the Jewish people, who followed the rules of the Old Testament. But two other gospels have these instructions from Jesus, written especially for the Gentiles.

*So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mark 10:11–12).*

*Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.*

*(Luke 16:18).*

The phrase "except for fornication" is not included in these verses. Jesus just says that a man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is committing adultery. The same is true for a woman who divorces and marries another man. In the original Greek language the word for "commits" is in the present progressive tense. That means that the act of adultery continues on. It does not stop with the first time of sexual union.

Herod Antipas was a king who lived in the time of John the Baptist. John was a very outspoken prophet. He



pointed out sin wherever he saw it and was not afraid of people with great power. Herod Antipas had taken Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, to be his wife. John had spoken out against this.

John was a popular prophet with the people and many listened to him. When Herodias heard that John was speaking against her, she became angry.

She had Herod lock John in prison to keep him quiet. Herod admired John and did not wish to harm him. However, Herodias hated John for his truthfulness in pointing out sin. When a chance came to have John killed, Herodias quickly moved to have him beheaded. This took John out of the way, but it did not make the sin right.

### WHAT DOES THE "EXCEPTION CLAUSE" MEAN?

What did Jesus mean when He said "except for fornication" (sexual sin before marriage) in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19? There are three possibilities.

1. An incestuous marriage, that is, a marriage to a close relative (see Leviticus 18)
2. A sodomite marriage between two men or two women (see Leviticus 18:22)
3. A marriage where there was sexual unfaithfulness during the time the couple was betrothed (promised) to each other (see Deuteronomy 22:13–21)

These Old Testament verses could have been in Jesus' mind when he said a wife could be put away.

There are a number of reasons why the "exception clause" in Matthew does not mean marital unfaithfulness.

1. Jesus' disciples were very surprised at what he said about divorce (Matthew 19:10). If Jesus had been saying the same thing as the Pharisees, that divorce was all right when there was unfaithfulness in the marriage, then the disciples would not have been very surprised.

2. The New Testament teaching for husbands says that a husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. Jesus gave Himself and died to make the church clean and holy. The church is guilty of spiritual adultery (James 4:4), but Jesus has not divorced the church. This is the example that Jesus gives for all husbands.

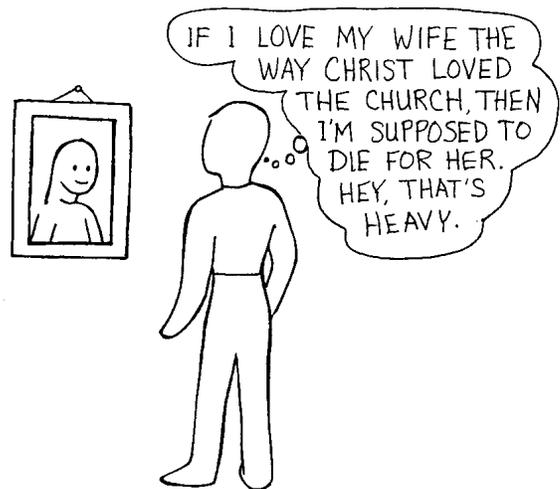
3. It does not fit with the higher standards which Christ set up. In Matthew 5:31 Jesus said that religious leaders had been teaching that divorce was all right, at least where there was unfaithfulness in marriage. However, He did not see that as good enough. He said, "But I say unto you..."

4. Christians are often called to suffer for righteousness (1 Peter 2:20–21). Unfaithfulness in marriage can cause a lot of suffering. It can be a time

to be victorious through suffering rather than to reject suffering (1 Peter 4:12–14).

5. God warns believers that it is not good to go to law before unbelievers. To get a divorce it is necessary to go to law (1 Corinthians 6:10).

6. Jesus taught His followers to be more righteous than the Pharisees. He was saying that the righteousness of the Pharisees was not good enough for God's kingdom. One group of Pharisees believed that a man could divorce his wife ONLY if she were guilty of unfaithfulness to him. After Jesus had said that the righteousness of the Pharisees was not good enough for His kingdom, would He then say that what they taught was the way for Christians to live?



To review what has been said, divorce is not the answer when there are problems in marriage. Christians are to have a higher standard than the Pharisees. Christians are called to suffer for the sake of righteousness and not to go to law with one another. Christian marriage is based on love and faithfulness.

Marriage is a promise or contract made between two people and God. Businessmen take contracts seriously. They do not honour people who break contracts. Is it right for Christians to have a lower standard?

Our society and our way of life is breaking down by breaking marriage contracts. Many people do not act in grown-up ways. They have become selfish, hard-hearted and immature. When things get tough in marriage they take the easy way out. They are not willing to work on problems, to have faith in the miracle of God to bring an answer.

When Ellen was in her late teens she began to drift away from God and to run around with the wrong crowd. She knew that the Bible says, "A companion of fools corrupts good manners," but she rebelled against God's Word. Ellen married a non-Christian man and soon found him to be a very immature, selfish person. After two

children, Ellen's husband divorced her to live with another woman.

All this pain and suffering caused Ellen to turn to the Lord again. Her love for the Lord deepened. For twenty-five years she kept praying for her husband. She raised her two children and taught them the ways of God. Both her daughter and her son grew up to love and follow the Lord. Her son became a minister.

Twenty-six years after the separation, Ellen's husband, now alone after the death of his second wife, found that he had an incurable disease and would soon die. He contacted Ellen and asked her forgiveness for the way he had treated her. Then he asked if she would marry him again. Ellen gladly consented. It was their son's privilege to marry his father and mother again. Ellen's husband died a month later, leaving a great testimony of what God had done in his life.

Ellen felt rewarded for all her years of hardship. She had gone through loneliness and tears, prayer and fasting, for her husband and her children. Many times she had wished for a husband to lean on for strength. But in her desperation God had provided. He had seen her through, and she felt satisfied. As a rebuilder she had held up a shining example of the sanctity of marriage and of God's provision for her children and grandchildren. Their lives were eternally touched by her example.

### GRACE APPLIED TO MARRIAGE LAWS

The New Testament gives an example of a marriage relationship that goes beyond the law. It is a marriage which is guided by love and grace.

*Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly (Matthew 1:19).*

Joseph found that Mary, the woman he was about to marry, was pregnant. He first thought he would break off their plans for marriage.

By the old Jewish law he could have had her stoned. But the Holy Spirit told Joseph that Mary had not sinned sexually with another man. The baby that was forming in her was a miracle from God. Joseph decided to keep Mary and carry on with the marriage. With this act of love and grace, he became the step-father of Jesus.



This story is a picture of the grace that is taught in the New Testament. It is grace that forgives and loves. Rather than divorce, Jesus teaches the husband to forgive and show a strong example of love to his wife.

### WHAT ABOUT MARRIAGE TO UNBELIEVERS?

When Paul the Apostle wrote to the believers in Corinth, he gave advice about a couple where one was a believer and the other was not.

*But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all churches (1 Corinthians 7:12-17).*

A believer married to an unbeliever should stay in the marriage. However, if the unbeliever really wants to leave the marriage, he should be allowed to leave. But the believer should not leave the marriage. The believer is instructed to stay single if the unbeliever leaves. The believer should then keep reaching out in love to the unbelieving partner and try to restore the marriage.

God's method is to win the unbeliever by loving and supportive behaviour, not by hate and anger. This is the same principle taught in 1 Peter 3:1-2.

*Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*



## REMARRIAGE

With divorce so common, the question will be asked, "If I am divorced, may I remarry?"

In answer, read again the scriptures on pages 11 and 15. God sees a man and woman who have taken the vow of marriage as bound together for life. If they divorce or separate, they are not to marry another person as long as both of them are living.

Steve was a young Christian man. He had grown up in the country but now lived in the city. After moving to the city he had met Sheila. Steve and Sheila grew to like each other a lot and decided to get married. She had been married before and was divorced. They talked to friends and read some books about divorce. Most seemed to say that it was all right to get married again after a divorce. They decided that they would go ahead and get married.

The day before the wedding Steve had a phone call from his pastor friend in his home village. The pastor said he had heard just the day before about the marriage plans. As they talked, the pastor shared some concerns he had about remarriage after a divorce. Steve wanted Sheila to hear what he had heard. Later that day he and Sheila got on the phone together, and the pastor again went over his reasons why he felt remarriage after divorce was wrong.

As they talked, both Steve and Sheila were convinced that they should cancel the wedding. Both had had questions about remarriage when they started going together. Now they felt that this was God's way of telling them that marriage was not right for them.

Steve and Sheila decided that they should gather together all the people who were a part of their wedding. They would tell them that they were cancelling the wedding. They would explain the reasons why they felt that marriage after divorce was wrong.

When they talked to the people who came for the wedding, everyone was surprised. After Steve and Sheila explained their reasons, a number of guests came up to them and expressed admiration for their courage. They thought Steve and Sheila had made the right decision.

These were the reasons Steve and Sheila gave for calling off the marriage.

### Marrying Again After Divorce...

1. Is wrong. God hates divorce.
2. Breaks a sacred promise made before witnesses and before God.
3. Hurts the reputation of the one marrying again.
4. Hurts the marriage of others by giving them an excuse to divorce.
5. Will increase the guilt of the one marrying again.
6. Will hurt the future security and ministry of the one marrying again.
7. Goes against God's original plan for marriage.
8. Hurts parents. Parents don't want to see their children and grandchildren in broken families.
9. Lowers God's standards for the children.
10. Sets up a relationship of conflict.

## THE REBUILDER

If you are divorced, does that mean that you have to go through the rest of your life single?

There are three ways to answer that question.

1. You can return to your first partner, unless the first partner has remarried.

2. If God wants you to marry someone else, and you are innocent in the divorce, He can remove the first partner in death.

3. God can bless a single life if the life is given in service to Him. The single life does not have to be punishment. Instead it can be a life of joy as you work to rebuild the lives and marriages of others (1 Corinthians 7:32-35).

*Now to the married I command...: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).*

God's desire is that the believer work on putting the marriage back together. The believer should remain single and always be available to put the marriage back together again. It may seem hard to live a single life in trying to serve God. But there are rewards too. Being single can draw a person closer to the Lord.

*But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.*

*(1 Corinthians 7:32).*

A rebuilders has decided to seek God's best for his personal life, marriage, children and ministry to others. A rebuilders learns to see what God is doing in his life. The present troubles can turn into a blessing in the future if God is allowed to work out His plan. God desires each of His children to have a life message. A life message is a message that can be learned by looking at someone's life.

The Bible has the stories of many great people. Their stories tell about their failures as well as their successes. In many life stories, God made a life message out of failure and scars. For example, in his pre-Christian years Paul the Apostle had great pride in himself. He thought he was right in what he believed. He caused many Christians to be put in jail. After he became a Christian, God put some limitations into his life that caused suffering. Paul was put in prison often. He had a sickness which could not be cured. Because of these limitations Paul did not sin from pride. He preached the pure gospel in many places throughout the world. He was often reminded of his past and of his weakness. He always told the people that everything he did was done in the power of Jesus Christ.

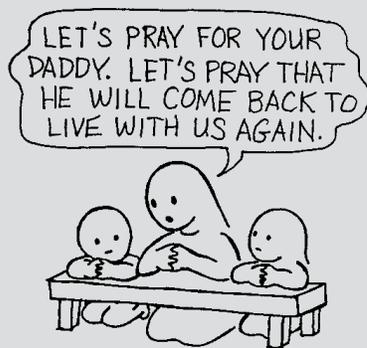
Don and Alice had two young children. Don was a very talented man. He worked in band administration, and in his work he did a lot of travelling.

After five years of marriage, Don left his family. He had found another woman whom he said he loved more. She had broken up with her husband, and she and Don started living together in another town.

Alice was very sad. She was left alone with the two children to look after. But she decided to be true to her marriage vows. She never went with any other men. She did her best to make a good home for her children. Some of Don's family were Christians. They prayed faithfully for Don and Alice for years.

Don kept telling his friends he could never leave the second woman. He loved her too much and he didn't love his wife. However, after about six years Don and the second woman started to fight a lot. Don began to have a lot of health problems. They decided to break up.

Don went back to Alice, a very broken man. Alice agreed to take him back. They had a lot of struggles. They both had changed over the eight years. Don's illness made him hard to live with. But they kept trying. After a while Don rededicated his life to Jesus. They now have a reconciled family, which proves that God can put right a seemingly hopeless breakup. The second woman was also reconciled to her husband.



### EVERLASTING FAITHFULNESS

In the Old Testament book of Hosea we read about God's everlasting love and faithfulness to his dear and special people the Jews. Hosea the prophet was an example of this love. He kept on reaching out in faithful and loving ways to Gomer his wife, who was separated from him and living in adultery. Eventually he won her back. Their marriage was restored because of his faithfulness.

The picture given in Ephesians 5:22-23 is one of Jesus Christ and the church. Jesus is the husband and the church is the bride. Even if the church is unfaithful to Jesus, He does not abandon her. He loves her forever and will not forsake her. He is always working to bring the church back to Himself when she wanders away. This is given as an example to all husbands.

Rich grew up in a Christian family. However, as he grew into manhood he drifted away from his Christian convictions. He married a girl who was not a Christian. Soon after his wedding he went into the army and was sent overseas. Since his wife did not want to go there, he left her at home.

After a few months Rich got a letter from his wife saying that she didn't want to be his wife any more. She had found another man she liked better. When Rich returned home from his army duty, he tried to persuade her to change her mind. He tried in kindness to rebuild a relationship with her. She would not change her mind and went ahead with a divorce.

Rich was deeply hurt by all this, but in his sadness he turned to God. He prayed and searched the Bible to find God's will for his life. From his search he learned that it was not right for him to marry again.

For over thirty years Rich has chosen to obey God and live as a single person. He has dedicated his life to serving God and giving God freedom to develop in him a mature Christian character. He spends much time in meditation and prayer. He also gives much of his time to serving others and to helping in the spread of the gospel. Rich has his times of loneliness, but he feels the Lord's presence especially near and dear to him then.

### SEVEN GOALS OF A REBUILDER AS A DIVORCED PERSON

1. Rebuild a heart that seeks after the Lord Jesus.
  - A wise rebuilder wants friendship with the Lord (Matthew 22:37-38). His greatest desire is the presence of the Lord. His happiness is found in the Lord.
  - A rebuilder who pleases the Lord will find that even his enemies get along with him (Proverbs 16:7).
  - A rebuilder confesses all sin and seeks cleansing by the blood of Jesus.
  - A rebuilder enjoys meditating on God's Word.
  - A rebuilder who shares God's good and perfect gifts will be sought out by other people. They will be drawn by the evidence of God's grace.
2. Rebuild the true picture of marriage that was in the mind of Christ by sharing your testimony with people God brings into your life.
3. Rebuild communication with the former partner.
  - A rebuilder will find out what hurt the partner in the first place. The rebuilder will just listen and give the partner time to think and express feelings without a lot of pressure. A rebuilder shows a true willingness to understand.
  - A rebuilder is willing to give the partner something of real value, whether in time, money or effort. This shows sincerity in the effort to reconcile.
  - A rebuilder will be patient to wait for any good chances to rebuild the marriage.

- A rebuilders will build friendship with the parents-in-law. This will be especially helpful for the children.
  - A rebuilders will not date anyone else.
  - A rebuilders will not blame the partner. A rebuilders will pray for the partner (James 5:16).
  - A rebuilders will keep on loving and forgiving the partner even if the partner marries someone else.
- 4.Rebuild the original marriage whenever possible, if the other partner is willing and able to forsake all other relationships.
- A rebuilders will get the help of the extended family, parents, parents-in-law, brothers and sisters to restore the family. This is especially helpful to children.
  - A rebuilders will teach the children to be loyal, loving and thankful to the other partner. The children should learn to be thankful even for the situation of a broken family. God can teach some good lessons through it (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- 5.Rebuild a teaching relationship with your children.
- A rebuilders will clear his or her conscience with the former partner. A rebuilders will not place blame on the former partner.
  - A rebuilders will teach the children to respect the other parent's point of view.
  - A rebuilders will spend special time with the children individually. A rebuilders will try to answer the children's questions about life.
  - A rebuilders will encourage the children to memorize scripture.



- 6.Rebuild standards in the church.
- A rebuilders should learn the scriptural reasons for not getting a divorce. A rebuilders will be willing to share these reasons with others.
  - A person who has had a broken marriage has an important ministry to many others. The rebuilders can share personal failures and encourage others to follow what the Bible says.
- 7.Rebuild a life message to strengthen marriage.
- A rebuilders will get rid of all guilt from the past.
  - A rebuilders will conquer all bitterness over the broken relationship.

- A rebuilders will then have a life message of how God has taken past weaknesses and by His grace has transformed them into strong character traits.

\*The word "fornication" (Greek porneia) is used in the New Testament 56 times. Thayer defines the word porneia as "premarital sex" or "sex before marriage" or "illicit sexual intercourse." From other usages in catalogs of sins (e.g. Galatians 5:19-21) it seems clear that a distinction is to be noted between porneia (fornication or sex before marriage) and moicheia (adultery, sexual intercourse outside of marriage).

## MORE HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT from NYM Ministries

- Taming the Tiger: *Discussions on Sexuality for Young Men*  
 Choose Life: *Saying No to Suicide*  
 Breaking the Cycle: *Saying No to Family Violence*  
 Hosea: *A Broken and Restored Marriage*  
 Winning the Struggle (Forgiveness)  
 Family Fraud: *The Deception of the Common-Law Relationship*  
 The Single Mother and Her Children  
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 Family Studies - *A manual for family life seminars. Discusses marriage, parenting, money management and emotional issues such as anger and jealousy.*  
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 Hope for the Hurting - *Dealing with the effects of sexual abuse.*  
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 Mothers' Studies - *Fifty-two short Bible lessons dealing with a mother's personal life, marital relationships and family responsibilities.*  
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