

# Can a Divorced Man Pastor a Church?



Theological Discourse

## **PREFACE**

This essay is dedicated to one of my recently divorced brothers in the lord, who others and I believe has been called to be a pastor but questions his qualifications due to being divorced. He is one of few who does not hide behind false self-righteousness but breathes honesty and integrity. Our decisions and studies have borne much fruit, allowing us to grow and displace any darkness in our lives with the light of Christ Jesus. So, with an open heart, I have searched the scriptures for the answer, "Can a Divorced Man be a Pastor?"

## **INTRODUCTION**

This essay includes fifteen positions with summaries that use biblical analysis and systemic theology to clear any ambiguities supporting my conclusion of the qualifications needed for a man to be a Church Leader/Pastor. Because of human rationalities, we must remove all perceived notions and allow revelations of biblical truths to guide us. Let us pray to be one with Christ Jesus, then look into the scriptures for direction based on His wisdom and Knowledge. Remember Proverbs 3:5: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your understanding."

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## 1. "One Wife," biblical verses, 1 Tim 3:2, Tit1:6, 1 Tim 3:12



### **Qualification for being a Bishop, Pastor, or Church Leader.**

**1Tim 3:2** "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of **"one wife,"** vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;"

### **Qualification for being an Elder.**

**Tit 1:6** "If any be blameless, the husband of **"one wife,"** having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly."

### **Qualification for being a Deacon.**

**1Tim 3:12** "Let the deacons be the husbands of **"one wife,"** ruling their children and their own houses well."

**Summary:** It seems that almost every Pastor and overseer interprets Paul's wording differently in **1 Tim 3:2, Tit 1:6, and 1 Tim 3:12** having **"One Wife."** Sometimes, one fails to realize that in Act 22:3, Paul gives us some knowledge of his tremendous background. Paul, before conversion, **Act 9:1-9** was Saul, a **student of Gamaliel.** Saul received extensive training both in the OT law and in the rabbinic traditions. Thus, Paul's writing of **"One Wife"** is not meant for various interpretations, but the wording comes from a wealth of knowledge of Jewish law and traditions, as written in the Torah and Talmud. Thus, in this essay, I pray to reveal Paul's true meaning and understanding of **"one wife."**

## 2. Church Leader, Moral Requirements, 1 Tim 3:1- 13



### Qualifications for Overseers

**1 Tim 3:1** "This is a true saying: If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

**1 Tim 3:2** "A bishop then **must be blameless, the husband of "one wife," vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;**"

**1 Tim 3:3** "**Not given** to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;"

**1 Tim 3:4** "One that **ruleth well his own house**, having his children in subjection with all gravity;"

**1 Tim 3:5** "(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"

**1 Tim 3:6** "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

**1 Tim 3:7** "Moreover **he must have a good report of** them which are without; lest **he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.**"

### Qualifications for Deacons

**1 Tim 3:8** "Likewise must the deacons be grave, **not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;**"

**1 Tim 3:9** "Holding the mystery of **the faith** in a pure conscience.

**1 Tim 3:10** "And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being **found blameless.**"

**1 Tim 3:11** "Even so must **their wives** be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things."

**1 Tim 3:12** “Let the deacons be the husbands of **“one wife,”** ruling their children and their own houses well.”

**1 Tim 3:13** “For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and **great boldness in the faith** which is in Christ Jesus”

### Summary: Qualifications for Overseers

Other than **“one wife.”** Paul adds in **1Ti 3:1-5** that fundamental assembly essentials to be an overseer should include managing his household well, keeping his **children under control** with all dignity, not being a drunkard, not violent, but gentle and peaceful in spirit, not having a love of money, and having hospitality to welcome and teach strangers. Paul concludes in **1Ti 3:7** that an overseer should not be a novice, untrustworthy, or liar but have the respect of those around him.

### Qualifications for Deacons

**1 Tim 3: 8-13** closely parallels qualifications for becoming an Overseer, but Paul adds in verse #11 that a deacon’s wife should also measure up to certain standards.

**What I look for,** I believe, aligns with Paul in that an overseer’s essentials would not only exist on Sundays but in his life inside and outside of the home, always displaying honesty, truthfulness, forgiveness, care for others, self-sacrifice, respect for others, having a good prayer life, not having a love of money, but seeking a heart to pick up his cross in following Christ, thus embracing Christ’s calling for him to be an overseer.

### Side Note: Children

**1Ti: 3:4, 12;** and **Tit: 1:6** both basically state that an overseer, elder, or deacon should have faithful, trustworthy children, not accused of any wrongdoing. I believe this to be true, to the point that a parent should do everything in their power to raise a child that both loves and fears the lord. However, parents soon realize at a certain age, their control starts to decrease as their child’s self-will increases. This normal process leads teens or young adults into a theological premise called **“The Age of Accountability.”** In Jewish customs, the child’s age was around **thirteen.** The main reason for adding this as a side note is I have seen church leaders expel their late teen child for fear of losing their church position, only to find years later that they had made a **colossal error in judgment.**

### 3. The Mosaic Law of Divorce, Deu 24:1-4



#### Laws Concerning Divorce

Deu 24:1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes **because he has found some indecency in her**, and he writes her a **certificate of divorce** and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,"

Deu 24:2 "and **she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife,**"

Deu 24:3 "and if the latter husband turns against her and **writes her a certificate of divorce** and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife,"

Deu 24:4 "then her **former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD**, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance."

**Summary: It appears that customs and cultural influences did not all stay in Egypt.** In this early period, it was very prevalent among the Israelites to divorce. These influences were very deep-rooted and not quickly abolished. However, in **The Mosaic Law of Divorce**, Moses addresses the issue with two conditions. **(1)** The act of divorcement was to be **certified on a written document**, the preparation of which, with legal formality, would afford time for reflection and repentance; and **(2)** In the event of the divorced wife being married to another husband, **she could not, on the termination of that second marriage, be restored to her first husband**, however desirous he might be to receive her.



#### 4. Divorce and Remarriage Luke 16:14-18



##### **The Law and the Kingdom of God**

**Luk 16:14** "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him."

**Luk 16:15** "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

**Luk 16:16** "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."

**Luk 16:17** "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

##### **Divorce and Remarriage?**

**Luk 16:18** "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

**Summary:** **Luke 16:18** is one of the **most misinterpreted** verses in the Holy Bible. If you read the previous verses starting from Luke 16:14, it is clear that Christ Jesus' teachings convicted the Pharisees, making them covetous and jealous of Him. Since God knows the hearts of all men, including the Pharisees, it is easy to understand that Jesus conveyed to them that they had divorced God on a spiritual level and that they had committed adultery. So, **Luke 16:18 refers to the Pharisee's spiritual relationship with God. Reference, Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience in Isaiah 50:1** "Thus says the LORD, "Where is the certificate of divorce By which I have sent your mother away? Or to whom of My creditors did I sell you? Behold, you were sold for your iniquities, And for your transgressions your mother was sent away."

## 5. Jesus' teaching of divorce, Gen 2:24, Mat 19:1- 12



### One Flesh

**Gen 2:24** "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be **one flesh.**"

Teaching About Divorce

**Mat 19:1** "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; "

**Mat 19:2** "And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there."

**Mat 19:3** "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? "

Mat 19:4 "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,"

**Mat 19:5** "And said, For this cause shall a man **leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife:** and they twain shall be **one flesh?**"

**Mat 19:6** "Wherefore they are no more twain, but **one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**"



**Mat 19:7** "They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?"

**Mat 19:8** "He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."

**Mat 19:9** "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."

**Mat 19:10** "His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry."

**Mat 19:11** "But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. "

**Mat 19:12** "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

**Summary:** Christ Jesus reiterates The Mosaic Law of Divorce, **Deu 24:1-4**. Still, He also includes the forgotten verse found in **Gen 2:24** that divorce is more than a legal contract, but a **spiritual covenant** between the husband and wife, becoming **One Flesh**, which gives reason to **Mat 19:8**, where Christ Jesus makes a statement that **the hardness of the heart is NO longer a condition for divorce. Remember**, Moses added this due to the cultural influences that did not all stay in Egypt, **position #3**. This **spiritual covenant** of becoming **One-Flesh with God** is why one must leave his mother and father, join his wife, and become one flesh. Therefore, **only believers can set forth this high and holy covenant of marriage**. Please note, however, verses **Mat 19:6** on becoming one flesh that "**NO MAN CAN SEPARATE**." Then, in **Mat 19:9**, Christ Jesus states that a believer may only divorce when one commits fornication, which breaks the spiritual covenant of one flesh and God.

## 6. Jesus' teaching of divorce, Mar 10:1-12, Mat 5:27- 32



### Teaching About Divorce

**Mar 10:1** "Getting up, He \*went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan; crowds \*gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more began to teach them."

**Mar 10:2** "Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife."

**Mar 10:3** "And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"

**Mar 10:4** "they said, "Moses permitted a man TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY."

**Mar 10:5** "But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment."

**Mar 10:6** "But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE."

**Mar 10:7** "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER,"

**Mar 10:8** "AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh."

**Mar 10:9** "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

**Mar 10:10** "In the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again."

**Mar 10:11** "And He \*said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits **adultery** against her;"

**Mar 10:12** "and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing **adultery**."

## **Lust**

**Mat 5:27** “You have heard that it was said, ‘**Do not commit adultery.**”

**Mat 5:28** “But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart.”

**Mat 5:29** “So if your right eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose a part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell.”

**Mat 5:30** “If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away! It is much better for you to lose one of your limbs than to have your whole body go off to hell.”

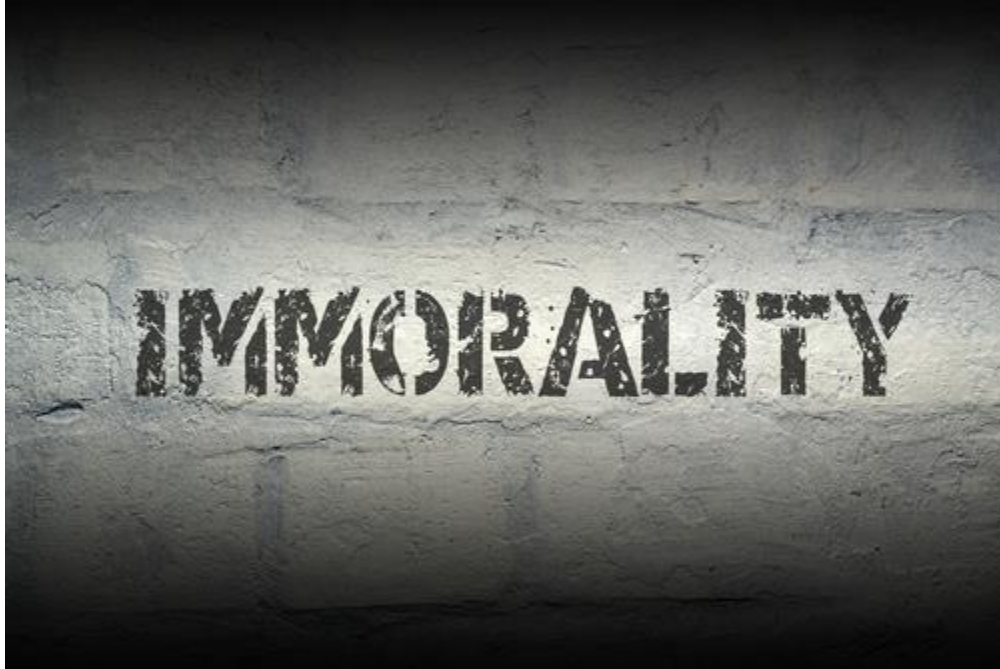
Divorce

**Mat 5:31** “It was also said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.’”

**Mat 5:32** “But now I tell you: if a man divorces his wife for any cause other than her unfaithfulness, then he is guilty of making her commit adultery if she marries again; and the man who marries her commits adultery also.”

**Summary:** **Mar10:1-12** somewhat parallels **Mat 19:1-12** as the jealous Pharisees confront Christ Jesus; He again restates to them the elements of the Mosaic Law found in **Deu 24:1-4** but with a new element that both husband and wife become One Flesh as stated in **Mat 19:5** and **Mar 10:8**. Christ Jesus is trying to convey that marriage is sacred, bonding the husband and wife into **One Flesh**. He is trying to make them understand that marriage is more than a legal contract but a spiritual covenant with each other and God. **Mat 5:27-30** gives an understanding of the importance of the **One Flesh covenant** with God and the spiritual lengths one should go to avoid adultery, which breaks the covenant. **Mat 5:31-32** again repeats that the adulterous should be given a written notice of divorce and that if anyone marries an adulterous, they also inherit the sin.

## 7. Flee Sexual Immorality, 1CO 6:12-20



### Flee Sexual Immorality

**1Co 6:12** "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything."

**1Co 6:13** "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food; but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body."

**1Co 6:14** "Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power."

**1Co 6:15** "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be!"

**1Co 6:16** "Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO WILL BECOME ONE FLESH."

**1Co 6:17** "But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him."

**1Co 6:18** "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body."

**1Co 6:19** "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"

**1Co 6:20** "For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

**Summary:** Paul supports his point by appealing to the truth of The **Marriage Covenant**, **Gen 2:24**, which defines the union between a man and a woman as “**One Flesh**.” Paul affirms that all sex outside of marriage is a sin, but illicit relationships by believers are especially reprehensible because they profane Christ Jesus with whom believers are one, thus arguing that the sin is unthinkable.

## 8. Principles for Marriage, 1Co 7:1-11, 39- 40



### Principles for Marriage

**1Co 7:1** "Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman."

**1Co 7:2** "But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband."

**1Co 7:3** "The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband."

**1Co 7:4** "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."

**1Co 7:5** "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

**1Co 7:6** "But this I say by way of concession, not of command."

**1Co 7:7** "Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that."

**1Co 7:8** "But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I."

**1Co 7:9** "But if they do not have **self-control, let them marry**; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

**1Co 7:10** "But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, **that the wife should not leave her husband,**"



**1Co 7:11** “but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.”

**1Co 7:39** “A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”

**1Co 7:40** “But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.”

**Summary:** The Corinthian believers had written a letter to Paul concerning marriage problems. With authority, Paul pens conduct that husband and wife should follow. However, the focus for his position is found in **1Co 7:10-11**, where Paul commands that a wife is **not to leave her husband**, and the husband is **not to leave his wife**; however, if one or the other does leave, they are **not to divorce, but remain unmarried, separated**. In **1Co 7:39**, Paul states that the bound of the covenant is completed **upon the death** of either the husband or wife, **allowing the surviving spouse to remarry another Christian**. Remember, Only **adultery**, breaks the covenant is grounds for divorce, **Mat 19:9**.

## 9. Marrying an Unbeliever, Deu 7:3-4, 2Co 6:14-15, 1Co 7:12- 15



### A Chosen People

**Deu 7:3** “Furthermore, you shall **not intermarry** with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons.”

**Deu 7:4** “**For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods**; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will quickly destroy you. The Temple of the Living God”

**2Co 6:14** “Be ye not **unequally yoked** together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath **light with darkness?**”

**2Co 6:15** “And what concord hath **Christ with Belial?** or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?”

Principles for Marriage”

**1Co 7:12** “But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, **he must not divorce her.**”

**1Co 7:13** “And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, **she must not send her husband away.**”

**1Co 7:14** “For the unbelieving husband is **sanctified through his wife**, and the unbelieving wife is **sanctified through her believing husband**; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.”

**1Co 7:15** “**Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave**; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, **but God has called us to peace.**”

**Summary:** In **Deu 7:3-4**, God solemnly warns Israel **not to intermarry** and turn to other gods. If they fail to heed the warning, He will cast them out because of their infidelity, resulting in both physical and spiritual death. Paul in **2Co 6:14-15** is again warning against marrying an unbeliever. His contrast from **dark to light, God to Baal**, is well noted and should be heeded. In **1Co 7:12-14**, Paul explains that **the believer in the unyoked marriage sanctifies the family for the sack of the children**. Paul, in **1Co 7:15**, informs us that when divorce occurs, the bond is broken, and the believer is at peace with God and allowed to remarry. However, **many have used this verse to justify and legitimize their actions**. We can all conclude that the Holy Bible correctly **warns all believers** that marriage should be between two believers, male and female, for it is more than a legal document; **it is a covenant between believers and God**.

## 10. Solomon Turns from the Lord, 1 Kings 11:1-4



### Solomon Turns from the Lord

**1Ki 11:1** “But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;”

**1Ki 11:2** “Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.”

**1Ki 11:3** “And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.”

**1Ki 11:4** “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.”

**Summary:** King Solomon did not have just “**ONE WIFE**,” or two or three, but **1Ki 11:3** informs us he had **seven hundred wives**, princesses, and **three hundred concubines**, which turned his heart away from God. Verse **1Ki 11:4** informs us that as he did not entirely forsake Jehovah, he joined the worship with his wives in worshipping other gods, **angering Jehovah for his infidelity**.

## 11. "One Flesh" Spiritual Covenant, Gen: 1:28, 2:18, 21- 24



### The Marriage Covenant

#### One Flesh Spiritual Covenant, Husband and Wife

**Gen 2:18** "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

**Gen 2:21** "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;"

**Gen 2:22** "And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

**Gen 2:23** "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."

**Gen 2:24** "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

**Gen 1:28** "God **blessed** them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

**Summary:** From the beginning, God spoke into existence The **Marriage Covenant**, found in **Gen 1:28**, where God blesses Adam and Eve to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth. The Hebrew word, “**bāraq**,” used to bless in **Gen 1:28**, was also the same in **Gen 12:3** in the making of the **Abrahamic Covenant**. In **Gen 2:24**, God unites Adam into “one flesh.” establishing the “**One Wife, One Flesh**” **marriage covenant**. However, Humankind’s infidelity and sinful nature have been and will always be its **root cause of divorce**, thus breaking the **marriage covenant** as well as the Old Covenant, **Jer 31:32** until Christ’s return.



## 12. New Creation in Christ Jesus, Isa 43:18-19, 2Co 5:16-17



### Savior

**Isa 43:18** “Do not call to mind the former things, Or ponder things of the past.”

**Isa 43:19** “Behold, I will do **something new**, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.”

The Ministry of Reconciliation

**2Co 5:16** “No longer, then, do we judge anyone by human standards. Even if at one time we judged Christ according to human standards, we no longer do so.”

**2Co 5:17** “Anyone who is joined to Christ is a **new being**; the **old is gone**, the new has come.”

**Summary:** An individual who has heeded God’s drawing and accepted Christ Jesus no longer identifies with the world system. They have a **new identity** with Christ Jesus, being baptized into the body of believers and belonging to Him. **The old life has passed away; the new life, being born again**, begins their new relationship with the glorified Christ. Reference: **John 3:1-15**, You Must Be Born Again

### 13. Hold On! Christ Forgave Me, 1Jn 1:8-10, Luk 7:47-50, Joh 8:10-11



#### Walking in the Light, 1Jn 1:5-10

1Jn 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

1Jn 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

1Jn 1:10 "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

#### A Sinful Woman Forgiven, Luk 7:36-50

Luk 7:47 "Wherefore I say unto thee, **Her sins, which are many, are forgiven**; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Luk 7:48 "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven."

Luk 7:49 "And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

Luk 7:50 "And he said to the woman, **Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.**"

#### The Woman Caught in Adultery, Joh 8:1-11

Joh 8:10 "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine **accusers**? hath no man **condemned thee**?"

**Joh 8:11** “She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, **Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**”

**Summary:** Just a minute! **1Jn 1:9** clearly states that Christ Jesus will **forgive** us if we **repent** and **confess** our sins. In addition, in **Luk 7:48**, Christ Jesus forgave the woman who had committed multiple sins, which most likely included **adultery**, and in **Jon 8:11**, Christ Jesus **forgave an adulterous**. So why can not Christ Jesus also forgive a pastor, or anyone, if they confess their **sin of adultery** and ask for forgiveness? The answer is **YES**; he does forgive the sin, **But what about the covenant?**

## 14. What do you mean marriage is a covenant?

Gen 2:24, Exo 20:14, Jer 3:14, Eze16:8, Mal 2:14, Mat 19:5-6, Eph 5:30-32



### The Seventh Commandment

**Exo 20:14** "You shall not commit adultery."

**The Marriage Covenant, "One Flesh."**

**Gen 2:24** "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

**Eze 16:8** "Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. **I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine,**" declares the Lord GOD."

**Faithless Israel Called to Repentance**

**Jer 3:14** "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for **I am married unto you:** and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:"

**Broken Covenant**

**Mal 2:14** "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, **against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.**"

**Jesus Teachings**

**Mat 19:5** "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**'"

**Mat 19:6** "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. **What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.**"

### **Wives and Husbands, Eph 5:22-33**

**Eph 5:30** "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

**Eph 5:31** "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be **one flesh.**"

**Eph 5:32** "This is a great mystery: **but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**"

**Summary:** A covenant is a contract, an agreement, between parties. When God is one of those parties, it is a **solemn contract**, a **sacred agreement**. God views "marriage" as more than a legal contract, but a **covenant** with Him, where **He spiritually creates** a husband and wife into "**One Flesh,**" **Gen 2:24**. Since God establishes the covenant, only believers can partake of it. It is a contract that no man can break, **Mat:19:6**. The **Marriage Covenant** is so important that God, in the **seventh commandment**, informs us never to commit **adultery**, which would break the covenant.

## 15. The Calling, 1Co 12:18, Joh 15:16, 2Pe 1:10



### **One Body with Many Members 1Co 12:12-31**

**1Co 12:18** "But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired."

### **I Am the True Vine**

**Joh 15:16** "You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of him in my name."

### **Confirm Your Calling and Election, 2Pe 1:3-15**

**2Pe 1:10** "So then, my friends, try even harder to make God's call and his choice of you a permanent experience; if you do so, you will never abandon your faith."

**Summary:** **1Co 12:18** states that God is the One who sovereignly gives gifts and gives them as they please Him. He is the One to be pleased. These gifts are in the body so that the body can function. The purpose of that gift is to bear much fruit, as listed in **Joh 15:16**. However, **2 Pe 1:10** informs one to be diligent in giving all effort, thus embracing the calling given by God to ensure that one does not abandon the faith—**2Co 13:5** somewhat parallels, as one it instructs to examine oneself. I have noticed throughout the years that failure to heed **Pro 4:23, "Guarding One's Heart,"** begins the abandonment of the faith. From the beginning, Pride, Greed, and Lust have always been the root cause of abandonment. So, cherish, embrace the gift of God, and remember **Rom 8:30**, "And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified. "Always seek His will, **including marriage**, to keep on the narrow road.



## 16. Conclusion



### Understandings

- **Biblical Marriage is a spiritual covenant with God**, which began with Adam and Eve becoming **“One Flesh,”** as stated in positions #11 and #14.
- **The Mosaic Law of Divorce, Deu 24:1-4**, position #3, set the terms for a legal marriage contract; however, missing was the **“One Flesh”** Spiritual Contract, **Gen: 2:18, 21-25**, in position #11.
- **Many believe the “one wife” refers to not being a Polygamist and its consequences**, as stated in position #10. Solomon Turns from the Lord, **1 Kings 11:1-4**. The many references to Polygamy in the Old Testament do indeed give some merit to Paul’s instructions of **“One Wife,”** ending the practice of polygamy.
- **On the opposite side**, many believe that a pastor needs to be married and have one wife.
- **Christ Jesus restates the missing marriage covenant** of husband and wife becoming **“One Flesh,”** position 5. Jesus’ teaching of divorce, **Gen 2:24, Mat 19:1-12**, and 6. Jesus’ teaching of divorce, **Mar 10:1-12, Mat 5:27-32**

- **Marriage being a spiritual contract with God meant that Only Believers can enter into the covenant, Mat 19:5-6, and Eph 5:30-32, position 14.**
- **If a Christian man marries an unbeliever, position #9.** Marrying an Unbeliever, **Deu 7:3-4, 2Co 6:14-15, 1Co 7:12-15** concludes that the Marriage was based only on a **legal contract** found in Position #3—the Mosaic Law of Divorce, **Deu 24:1-4**. Since there was **no covenant**, he is free to remarry; however, this **demises** his testimony to become a pastor, reference **1 Tim 3:1-13**.
- **After conversion** and accepting Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, all previous sins and life are gone, position #12—New Creation in Christ Jesus, **Isa 43:18-19, 2Co 5:16-17**. Since one has been born again, they have a **new life**, allowing one, if chosen by God, to be a pastor, no matter what the previous sins were or how many past numbers of wives.
- **Progressive Christians** believe that if a pastor repents his sin or adulterous behavior, he is assured that Christ Jesus will forgive and that he can continue to pastor the church. However, they fail to realize that Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, set the requirements in **1 Tim 3:1-13**, knew and experienced Christ Jesus' forgiveness firsthand but also understood that **Marriage is more than a legal contract, but a spiritual covenant** that, **once broken, cannot be repaired**.

## Conclusion

### The Marriage Covenant

The **Edenic Covenant** was the first covenant between Adam, Eve, and God. In that covenant, one finds the **Marriage Covenant** in **Gen 2:24**, where God unites Adam and Eve in Marriage, spiritually making them "**One Flesh**" with Him. Because of Adam and Eve's sin, the **Edenic Covenant** was broken, and the **Adamic Covenant** followed, bringing Painful childbirth, Marital strife, and death, to mention a few, to the **Marriage Covenant**. However, **the Marriage Covenant introduced God's perfect plan for Marriage**.

### Meaning of "One Wife."

So why "**One Wife?**" Before becoming Paul, Saul was a **Gamaliel student** with extensive training in OT law and rabbinic traditions. His encounter with Christ Jesus on the road to Damascus brought him a new life, a "**chosen instrument**" **Act 9:15**, which gave him revelations and unique insights into the New Covenant that all Christians share today. With just two words, "**One Wife,**" Paul addressed the age-old practice of **Polygamy** prevalent in the Old Testament; he **brought adherence** and **understanding to Gen 2:18**, where God stated that man should not live alone and created a **woman as his helper**. But lastly, Paul understood that when a Christian man and female marry, it is **more than a legal contract**, but where they

become **“One Flesh” Eph 5:31**, no longer two, but a **“spiritual one.”** This union is the fruit of more than companionship or partnership, but **spiritual intimacy with God** where God resides with a Christian husband and wife, establishing a **Marriage Covenant** with God as stated in **Gen 2:24**. It is that **Marriage Covenant** that Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit want **all to understand and adhere to**.

## **Bottom Line**

### **Adultery**

**What has always broken a spiritual covenant with God is the sin of adultery.** A good example is **Jer 3:8**. This concludes that **if a pastor commits adultery**, the pastor breaks the **Marriage Covenant** with his wife and God, and per **1Ti 3:1-13**, **the pastor must step down**. If the pastor's wife commits adultery, the pastor's covenant is **not affected or broken**, so he can continue to pastor and **remarry** if he so chooses.

If a Christian man is inspired to become a pastor but had a prior divorce due to his **wife's adultery**, he is still eligible to become a pastor. His **“One Flesh”** covenant, **1 Tim 3:2** requirement, **remains intact**, for he has not broken his covenant with God. In addition, if he so chooses, he can **remarry** because he has not broken the covenant. But again, if **he has committed adultery**, then his covenant with God is **broken**, and he is **not eligible to be a pastor or overseer**.

### **Abandonment**

Suppose a Christian divorces another Christian, except for adultery; Paul clarifies in position #8, **1Co 7:10-11** that neither partner is free to marry another person. They should reconcile or at least remain unmarried. As it may seem to be unfair to either of the spouses, a covenant is an agreement that a believer makes with God, which is only broken with adultery by either of the spouses. A pastor overseer should never seek divorce but a **resolution** in finding a path to **restoration**, always having a heart of Christ.

### **Death**

Paul in Position #8. Principles for Marriage, **1Co 7:39-40** clarifies that the surviving spouse is **free to remarry**. Death does not break the covenant but fulfills its terms.

### **Single**

**Since the “One Wife” is a “One Flesh” covenant status**, a single man can become a pastor or overseer if he meets the other requirements as stated in **1 Tim 3:1-13**. Also, this would conclude that if the pastor's overseer's wife dies, his covenant is intact, and he can still hold the position of a pastor or overseer and remarry or stay single if he so chooses.