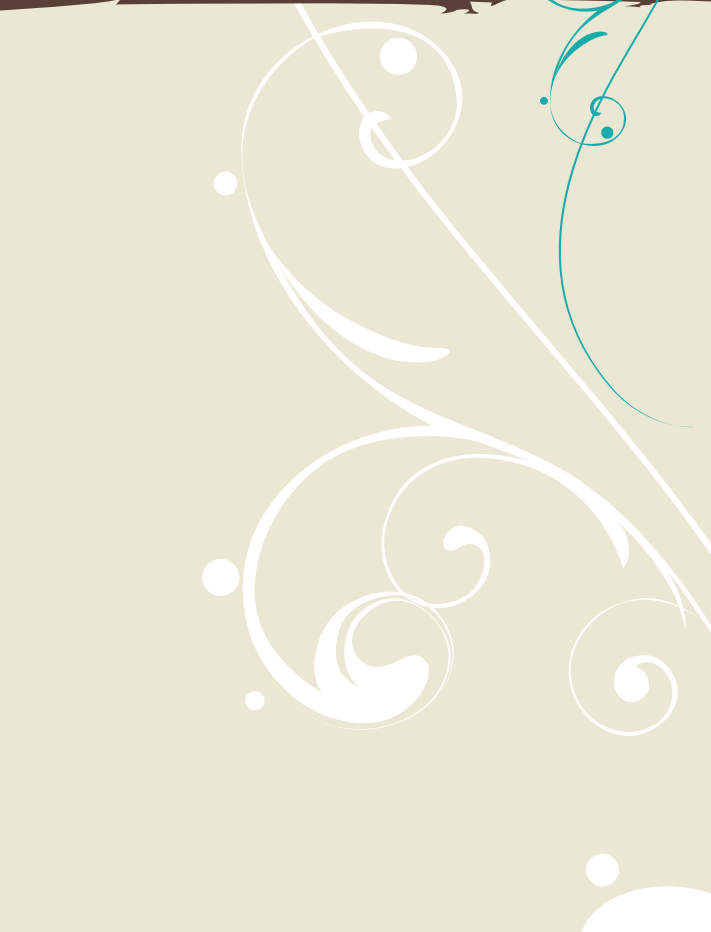


Marriage

WHAT LCBC BELIEVES



A Guide for those seeking marital advice
and biblical interpretations commonly
held by the leadership of LCBC.



Remarriage

The marriage of a previously married person is permissible under certain circumstances:

- The former spouse is deceased (Romans 7:2).
- The person seeking remarriage was the innocent party in a divorce that occurred for allowable circumstance (see Allowance for Divorce).
- A person who divorced for a non-allowable reason can remarry if their former spouse has already remarried or enters another sexually active relationship. The remarriage or sexual activity of the former spouse constitutes adultery (Matthew 19:9), so the divorce becomes permissible after the fact. If the former spouse does not commit adultery, a Christian is bound to seek reconciliation. In the absence of reconciliation they should remain single (1 Corinthians 7:11).

Restrictions on Marriage

- God's pattern for marriage unites a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24). God rejects homosexuality (Romans 1:26 & 27), so homosexual marriage is not permitted.
- Marriage should not unite one who has trusted Jesus for salvation to one who has not (2 Corinthians 6:14). However, an existing marriage of one who has trusted Jesus to one who has not does not invalidate the marriage (1 Corinthians 7:12 & 13).
- Marriage should not unite a person who divorced for a non-allowable circumstance (see Allowance for Divorce) to another person. This is not permitted because it would bring about sexual immorality in the eyes of God (Matthew 19:9).

God created marriage for companionship and pleasure (Genesis 2:18); to populate the earth (Genesis 1:28); to prevent sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 7:9); and to serve as a picture of the relationship between God and His people (Ephesians 5:22-32). From the beginning, the pattern for marriage has been one man married to one woman (Genesis 2:24). Since God created it, it is regulated according to His design.

Throughout the Bible

AND RECORDED HISTORY, MARRIAGE HAS INVOLVED TWO STEPS:

- (1) Public declaration of the marriage followed by
- (2) consummation through sexual intimacy

The form of the public declaration differs in various cultures. In our culture, the public declaration requires obtaining a government issued license and a wedding ceremony. The ceremony does not need to take place in a church or be officiated by a pastor to be valid in the eyes of God.

PERMANENCE OF MARRIAGE

God's intent for marriage is that it be permanent (Matthew 19:4-6) and broken only by death of one of the partners (Romans 7:2 & 3).

SEXUAL INTIMACY

God also created sex and encourages it to take place within marriage (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). The Bible does not forbid the use of birth control for the prevention of fertilization. Sexual intimacy that occurs outside of or prior to marriage is sexual immorality and is not permitted (1 Thessalonians 4:3-6).

Difficulties IN MARRIAGE

A marriage unites two imperfect people and therefore all marriages have conflict. People who reject divorce as an option for their marriage are far more successful in resolving their conflicts because their only options are resolution or continued conflict.

Married people are strongly urged to reject divorce as an option and put all of their energies into resolution. All available means should be used to resolve conflict including prayer, personal Bible study, counseling from a qualified counselor, books on marriage, support from mature Christian friends, or classes and seminars on marriage.

Although the problem causing conflict in the marriage may not appear to be spiritual in nature, often the root of the problem is spiritual. Any resources used to help resolve the conflict should be received from a biblical perspective.

LCBC staff can provide marital advice from a spiritual perspective on a short-term basis. For situations requiring longer-term counseling, referrals to outside sources will be provided.

Separation AND DIVORCE

SEPARATION

Separation can be permitted in order to protect innocent parties from abuse, or as part of a plan for achieving conflict resolution, but restoration of the marriage is the preferred outcome (1 Corinthians 7:11).

ALLOWANCE FOR DIVORCE

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:15 & 16). However, divorce is permitted in two circumstances:

- When adultery occurs (Matthew 19:9)
- When a partner who has not trusted Jesus abandons a partner who has trusted Jesus (1 Corinthians 7:15 & 16)

Divorce is not required in these instances, but is permissible. Although difficult, forgiving an adulterous spouse is the preferred outcome.

Although the Bible teaches that we become a new person after trusting Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17), trusting Jesus does not undo a marriage or allow for divorce (1 Corinthians 7:12-13).

THE LEADERSHIP OF LCBC will at times choose to restrict ministry involvement, partnership eligibility, and—in rare circumstance—attendance of those who choose to disregard God’s standard for their marriage or in other areas (1 Corinthians 5:11-12). This is not done to reject the person, but to reject the person’s behavior and to strongly encourage them to live a life that is pleasing to God (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

Fulfilling GOD’S STANDARD

Unfortunately, people fail to meet God’s standard in marriage and in other areas of their lives (Romans 3:23). Jesus’ death covers all of the ways that we have fallen short (1 Corinthians 5:21).

Divorce and adultery are not unforgivable sins and remarriages that are not permissible do not put a person in a continual state of sinfulness. However, in order to have the best relationship with God now, we need to acknowledge our past mistakes and endeavor to make choices in the future that are obedient to God (1 John 1:9).

As a church we are obligated to encourage individuals to make choices that are obedient to God. We accept and love everyone despite the fact that they have made wrong choices, but cannot support those who continue to disobey God.

Some Christians have come to conclusions that differ from those listed in this document. LCBC does not claim to be infallible in its views, but after prayer and study have chosen to operate and advise others according to these positions.



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