

**Russell Kelfer**

# **God's Truth About Marriage and Divorce**

**541-A**

**Series: The Beatitudes**



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Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

# God's Truth About Marriage and Divorce

We return to our study of the fourth attribute of a pure heart, single-mindedness. We have been looking at God's complaint, our characteristics, and the cause of double-mindedness found in James 4:1-10. The complaint is spiritual confusion in verse 8. The characteristic is spiritual weaknesses found in verses 1-3. The cause of double-mindedness is spiritual adultery found in verses 4-5. Friendship with the world is enmity with God, so the Scripture tells us.

The resulting study has been to look at what the enemy through the world system is using to confuse the Christian's mind. Satan's goal is clear. He simply wants to discredit God in many ways. He wants to discredit God's worth, His works, His words and His ways. In our generation, Satan has equipped himself to do this using five basic tools. He uses the media which reports as natural the standards of the world, secular education which teaches as reality the standards of the world, secular counseling which reinforces as redeeming, the standards of the world, and entertainment demonstrates the standards of the world as fulfilling. Organized religions accept the standards of the world as progressive.

Using these tools with this goal, Satan has communicated lie after lie after lie until, first subtly and now overtly, he has challenged the truth of God. Unless you and I as Christians begin to take these truths as convictions, the principles of Scripture that we would rather die for than relinquish, we and our children may be in big trouble. Satan's lies are like a skyscraper. Each one builds on the premise that the one beneath it is true. These lies are in the notes from the previous lessons, but I want to review the first three. These three lies are as follows:

Lie 1- Man is innately good. Left to himself, he will do

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that which is honorable, ethical and good. He will help his neighbor. He will give to the United Way. He is a "good Joe." Satan builds the next lie onto this foundation.

Lie 2- Man, being good, can trust in the inventions of his own mind, such as science, education, philosophy, psychology and history as the final truth even though all of these teach that there is no truth. Using his own inventions, based on his own good intentions, we reach the third lie.

Lie 3- Man is captain of his own fate. He can do whatever he sets his mind to do.

Lies, all of them lies. But the world, through the media, broadcasts this with every breath. It is taught in school in many classes. Men are counseled based upon these foundations. We are entertained by these philosophies. Organized religion suddenly reshapes its thinking to conform to these ideals.

But the truth of God is so clear. Man is not innately good. Man is a sinner by birth and a sinner by choice. Secondly, only in Jesus Christ is there truth, apart from Him there is no truth at all. Thirdly, apart from Him, we can do nothing. I am not the captain of my fate, the great I AM is the captain of my fate.

As we progress in this study, I trust that you will note that these overt lies of Satan have even deeper spiritual significance. We need to look at Romans 1. In the Amplified Version it says,

For ever since the creation of the world, His invisible nature and attributes, that is his eternal power and divinity, have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made, His handiwork. (Romans 1:20 Amplified Bible)

In I Corinthians 10 we read,

All of these things have happened as examples-as object lessons to us... (I Corinthians 10:11 TLB)

These physical truths and Satan's corresponding physical lies are twofold in importance. First of all, they violate the physical commandments of God. Secondly, they adulterate the spiritual illustrations of God.

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In the last lesson, we were looking at Satan's lies about morality, the *first being that the standards of morality change with the times*. Satan says that behavior is relative. When it comes to holiness, nothing is absolute. Mankind has bought this lie without so much as a struggle. Why not? It means that we decide what is right and what is wrong. It means that we can be God. God's standard, found in the Word of God, never changes. The world's standards are continually fluctuating based on society and the whims of man. The church is found in the middle being magnetically drawn between one and the other. Satan has caused us to believe one of four lies. We dealt with this in the last lesson.

Lie 1- One example is adultery. Satan says that God has changed His mind. Surely in the Old Testament, surely in the New Testament and surely a hundred years ago, it was true that adultery was wrong, but God changed His mind. He realizes now what man can handle. He realized that He was wrong in making things so severe.

Lie 2- We must have misunderstood. Surely it said that in the Scriptures, but we have misinterpreted the Word of God.

Lie 3- God is not relevant after all. Surely God didn't change His mind, but He is just not with the times.

Lie 4- God is more flexible. Surely those are the standards He sets, but He knows that we can't obey. He doesn't demand obedience.

So we have now accepted, and in some cases, glorified the very things that God hates. Here are three examples.

Example 1- Feelings. I shared with you in a previous lesson about a movie I saw. It was a clean movie, one you can take your children to. The problem was that in the end, the hero ended up stealing a million dollars from the government. He was the hero, because after all, he deserved it. The government would never miss it, and he was going to use it for a good cause. The movie ended on that note as everyone was applauding the hero.

On television the other night, I was watching a program to get some notes, but I couldn't watch it all the way through. It

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was called, "The Bad News Bears." It turned my stomach. It was labeled a kids program, and it was bad news, so the title was appropriate. In this movie, a coach was going to try to whip a team in shape. He represented everything that is wrong with authority. One of the "tough guys" rides up on a motorcycle and scares the coach off. The kids decide to steal a van, lie to their parents, and go to the game. A policeman drives up beside them, but they convince the policeman everything is okay and off they ride into the sunset to play in the big game. Our children watch this and think, "Wow, new heroes in the 20th century."

This is the common theology today. It is popular to steal, if you can steal from the government, the insurance company, big corporations, motels or hospitals. Our theology is what is mine is mine, and I will take it. What's yours is mine, if I can take it without getting punished, or if I need it more than you do. When you receive too much change when paying a bill at the cash register and go back to return it, the cashier thinks you are out of your mind. People don't do that anymore. I had a woman in a restaurant get highly indignant that I would question her math by giving me too much money as change.

The Word of God is clear. In Exodus 20 it says,

You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:15 NKJV)

Have your children memorized that verse? It means that you must never at anytime take that which is not yours. Leviticus 19 says,

You shall not steal, nor deal falsely.  
(Leviticus 19:11 NKJV)

The children see by your example that this value is absolute. Romans 2 says,

You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?  
(Romans 2:21 NKJV)

Do you steal? Do your children know God's divine alternative to stealing? I don't think this is very popular in our generation. We see it in Ephesians 4,

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands (Ephesians 4:28 NKJV)

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Stealing is never acceptable to God. Satan wants us to believe that stealing is relative. If our need is greater than the one who possesses it, take it, just don't get caught. As we watch movies or television, and read the newspaper, we see that this is the thrust of the moral fiber of today's society. The question is not whether it is right or wrong, but whether we need it worse than they do and whether or not we get caught. The deeper truth Satan is saying is that God cannot supply all of our needs through His riches in glory in Christ Jesus, so take all you can get for yourself.

Example 2- Lying. For the sake of simplicity, I want to refer to the same two shows. In the movie, they lied about the source of the money stolen, because it was for a good cause, and they deserved it. In the television program, the boys lied to their parents about the van, they lied about the trip, and they lied about the coach. The parents were portrayed like a bunch of idiots. The principle was that the end justified the means. The boys wanted to play in the ball game, and whatever they had to do to get there was fine. It taught that if your goal is good, it is acceptable to lie to get there.

Read the history books that your children bring home from school. The books no longer honor the truth, they honor accomplishment, whatever it takes to get there. Howard Hendricks, a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, tells this story. A man was reviewing his children on their memory verses one night. As his son's turn came, he asked what verse he had memorized. The son answered, "A lie is an abomination to the Lord." The phone rings, then the father turns to pick it up. The caller asked if his wife was home. The father covers the mouthpiece and says to his wife, "Elizabeth, it is Jane, are you home?" The wife answers, "Oh no, I don't want to talk to her." So the father answers, "I'm sorry Jane, she is not home. Can I take a message?" He then hangs up and turns to his son and says, "Now son, where were we?" The son answers, "We were doing my memory verse." The father asks, "Which one were we on?" The son answers, "A lie is an abomination to the Lord." The father says, "Right!" The son then responds, "Yeah and an ever present help in time of trouble, huh Dad?"

Proverbs 6:16 says that there are seven things that God

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hates. One is lying, and the other is a false witness who speaks lies. Proverbs 17:4 says that liars enjoy liars and seek out the like values in others. Proverbs 19:22 says that a poor man is better than a liar. It is better to be poor and honest than rich and a liar. John 8:44 and 55 says that God can't lie, and Satan can't tell the truth, therefore, God in you never tells a lie, and the flesh in you never tells the truth. It means that anytime you bend a truth or believe a lie, you are not being led by the Spirit of God.

The problem is that we believe that the end justifies the means. We are deceiving ourselves when we say it is okay to lie under some circumstances. If we say this, then we are saying that God is a liar. We are saying that there is no absolute truth. We are saying that there is no absolute God. Do our children understand what constitutes truth, or do we bend it to serve our own purposes then pretend it is not sin?

Example 3- Sexual Standards. I first want to focus on homosexuality. A recent article in a New York newspaper said that we need to show homosexuality in city advertising because it will bring in good money. A television evangelist was recently banned from secular television, because he told what God's position was on the subject. The same station daily broadcasts within its programming the lie that homosexuality is a natural alternative. Anita Bryant takes a stand publicly on this, one of the most serious moral issues of our time, and she is publicly harassed, ridiculed, banned and has become unpopular.

What does God say about this? Our children need to memorize this verse so that they can know what God wants. Leviticus 18:22 says that homosexuality is forbidden, because it is an enormous sin. One translation says it is detestable. Leviticus 20:13 says that the penalty for homosexual acts is death to both parties, because they have brought it upon themselves.

God does not hate the men and women who do this, He loves them. We are not to condemn them, but how He detests the act. Society says that it is relative. If people choose to participate in this and think it is okay, then we need to leave



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them alone. Now there are homosexual elements in control of cities, elections, and even the media itself.

Do you know what God does to a nation that allows itself to be perverted in this area by those standards? We can go back and read about what He did to Sodom and Gomorrah. Read why He did what He did. Satan is the author of a lie. The deeper truth Satan wants us to believe is that the church can satisfy itself spiritually without God. This is a lie. So we accept as “natural”, stealing, lying, homosexuality, prostitution and adultery. The ladies of the street now have their own unions and are striking in some places for better working conditions. Corruption and graft in high places are widespread. Proverbs says that it is not new, but it is detestable. We laugh about it thinking it is funny and say, “Well, they all do it.”

Marital unfaithfulness is being accepted too lightly today. Dr. Joyce Brothers recently said, “A mid-life affair is good for every marriage. Every man and woman ought to do it, because it helps their self-image.” She also said as she spoke to a hairdresser’s convention in the city, “Male liberation is only a generation away.” Male liberation is when men come to accept women’s liberation. Progress?

Pornography is another major problem of moral decay. Standards in the world today are getting so bad that some people are even getting sick of it. Grade school drugs, drunkenness, these are man’s new moral standards. They are okay, because men say they are. But, they are really not new moral standards, they are just old, old sins.

God’s standards haven’t changed. I Peter 1 says,

but as He who called you is holy, [that is He has separated you from the world by firm convictions,] you also be holy in all your conduct, [so you need to be separated from the world by firm convictions,]

because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.” [because He is in you and in control of your life.]

(I Peter 1:15,16 NKJV)

Ephesians 5 in The Living Bible says,

Don’t be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for

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the wrath of God is upon all who do them.

(Ephesians 5:6 TLB)

Verse 7 tells us not to even associate with these people.  
Verses 11-12 says,

Take no part in the worthless pleasures of evil and darkness, instead rebuke and expose them.

It is shameful even to mention here those pleasures of darkness which the ungodly do (the things that men do in secret.) (Ephesians 5:11,12 TLB)

God has not changed, and His standards have not changed.  
Malachi 3 says,

For I am the Lord, I do not change.

(Malachi 3:6 NKJV)

Hebrews 13 says,

Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

(Hebrews 13:8 NKJV)

Psalms 33 says,

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations. (Psalms 33:11 NKJV)

Psalms 119 says,

Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.

(Psalms 119:89 NKJV)

James 1 says,

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

(James 1:17 NKJV)

Morality is not relative. This is a lie of Satan. He has sold that lie to the world, and it is shaking the very foundations we are standing on. If Satan can sell the lie that morality is relevant, he has our behavior in his hip pocket. Having destroyed the basis of God's holiness in man, it is no problem to tear up His picture book of holiness, marriage.

Satan has two basic lies about morals and marriage:

1) marriage is not necessary for a physical relationship; 2) marriage is not permanent and 3) it can be terminated at will.

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The first leads to the second. The second leads to the third. Today, live-in lovers are the heroes of our age. The Marvin case is a landmark case we are told. Immorality carries with it certain inalienable rights. As clear as God's word is on the physical consequence of this physical rebellion against God, there is an even greater sin involved. It is the spiritual message that is preached by every premarital and extramarital sexual experience. As our children watch television 3 out of every 4 programs they see show some form of premarital or extramarital physical relationship as acceptable. Four of the five movies they go see do the same thing. In the newspaper in the last 2 weeks, there were four series depicting prominent people – historical, political and popular entertainers who were involved in these situations. In every case, they were people who had gone from one act of immorality to another. They were making visible, tangible heroes of these people and their many conquests.

What is the truth about sex outside of marriage? There are three things. The penalty to Israel tells God's heart. The importance to the church tells God's commandments. The portrait to the world tells God's reason. The Word says,

The man who commits adultery with another man's wife,...the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. (Leviticus 20:10 NKJV)

If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her,

then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones,...

(Deuteronomy 22:23,24 NKJV)

Is this too strong a penalty? Not for the spiritual truth that it teaches. What is the importance of it to the church? I Corinthians 6 says that sexual sin is never right. Our bodies are not made for it, but for God. Galatians 5 says,

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

(Galatians 5:16,19 NKJV)

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Ephesians 5 says,

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;  
(Ephesians 5:3 NKJV)

Have your children memorize this as they grow up. As they want to know the will of God regarding dating,

I Thessalonians 4 is essential,

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;  
(I Thessalonians 4:3 NKJV)

What is so important about this? Why does God place such a high priority upon sexual fidelity? It is because of the portrait that it teaches the world. II Chronicles 21 says,

he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray. (II Chronicles 21:11 NKJV)

God likens idolatry to adultery. Why? Jeremiah 3 tells us,

“Return, O backsliding children,” says the Lord; “for I am married to you...”  
(Jeremiah 3:14 NKJV)

Hosea 2 says,

“I will betroth you to Me forever;...  
...I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness...”  
(Hosea 2:19,20 NKJV)

Ephesians 5 tells us,

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own

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bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:23-32 NKJV)

Paul tells us the reason marriage is so important is that it is a picture of Christ and His relationship to the church. Marriage is a portrait, and the bridegroom is Jesus Christ. The church is the bride. Our spiritual relationship and spiritual intercourse with God was not possible until we were betrothed to Christ, until Calvary. A physical relationship outside of marriage, either before or during, says to the world that the church can have a spiritual relationship with God without the cross, and that is a lie. Just as a man has no access to God without first committing his life to Christ, so man was designed not to have physical fulfillment without commitment of his life to another.

Do your children understand this? Do they know how God feels about sex outside of marriage? Do they know how God feels about premarital sex? Do they know how God feels about heavy petting that leads to premarital sex? Do they understand the spiritual truth that sex portrays? Do they grasp what movements toward immorality in their lives are saying to God? They are being bombarded with it on television, in movies and at school. They are being told it is natural and acceptable and a normal expression of themselves. They are being sold a lie.

The third lie about morality builds on the other two: if holiness is relative and marriage is optional, then it stands to reason to those who find marriage an acceptable alternative, it is at best, not binding, but temporary.

If no commitment is required, then no commitment is binding. Hence, divorce becomes not a thing to be avoided

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for countless reasons, but a logical step for man, who as his own authority, can take it at will. So the world's concept of the permanence of marriage has degenerated to one of disdain. It is a joke, at best, one of tolerance for those "old fashioned" ideas. The church of Jesus Christ magnetically pulled by the reasonableness of the world's argument has come to condone, accept, and in many cases counsel and encourage the break up of the home. We can often "change partners" and not recognize the spiritual truth that is involved.

One of Satan's tools has been the legalistic condemnation of divorced people. I'm talking about the relegating of those who are divorced to second-class citizenship within the body of Christ. Then, he points an accusing finger at the church and says, "This is love?" As usual there is partial truth in his accusations. There is no scriptural basis for second-class citizenship in the church of Jesus Christ. There is no basis for a judgmental spirit that compartmentalizes one sin and brands those sinners as unclean. But Satan's message is to create a smoke screen so that out of guilt at our harsh or judgmental spirit, the pendulum of conviction will move to that inevitable gray area which says that God really has no firm attitudes on divorce. There you see is the lie. Even those here or listening on tape who have experienced divorce personally or in your immediate family, and we are told that is nearly 70% of the world's population, will be the first to admit that the acceptance of divorce as the normal Christian alternative violates both the essence and the intent of the Word of God.

In this lesson, we are not going to deal with the details of divorce, so if you were looking for something good and controversial you are in for a disappointment. If you were hoping for a good argument on what are and aren't acceptable grounds for remarriage, you will be disappointed again. I am not here to argue theological details. I am here to underline scriptural principles out of which conclusions must come and bring out some uncontested facts that we will all agree on.

Here are some principles we must agree upon.

Principle 1- Marriage was ordained for both spiritual and physical reasons.

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- A- To replenish the earth under authority as we see in Genesis 1:28.
- B- As a partial cure for man's loneliness, Genesis 2:18.
- C- To portray to the world, man's relationship to God through a visible, physical relationship here on earth, Ephesians 5:23-32.

Principle 2- He designed it in such a way, that two people were to become one, uniquely separate, yet indivisible.

In function they are separate, in essence, they are one. The best illustration God could have given us in this regard is the example of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In function they are separate, in essence they are one. The Christian who has been married in Christ, now finds himself in Christ, two people, separate, yet in essence, one, indivisible. What it literally says is that a man and woman in Christ become one. Their roles are different. Their functions are separate, but the essence of their being becomes singular. I Corinthians 6 says,

...for "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."  
[illustration]

But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.  
[This is the picture.] (I Corinthians 6:16,17 NKJV)

Principle 3- Satan's goal through unbelievers, as through the Pharisees, was and is to seek loopholes in God's plan to justify divorce. The rest of this passage will be found in Matthew,

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?"  
(Matthew 19:3 NKJV)

The Pharisees were saying, "Give us some loopholes, Jesus, we want to make this as convenient as possible."

Principle 4- Jesus ignored the temptation to argument and always returned to the principle, what was the intent in the heart of God? Jesus answers,

And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

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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?' (Matthew 19:4,5 NKJV)

Paraphrased, Jesus said,

"Don't you read the Scriptures? In them it is written that in the beginning, God created a man and a woman,

and that a man shall leave his father and mother and forever be united with his wife. The two shall become one-no longer two, but one!

And no man may divorce what God has joined together."  
(Matthew 19:4-6 TLB)

Principle 5- God from the outset, designed marriage to be permanent. We find this in verse 6,

"So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

(Matthew 19:6 NKJV)

Principle 6- Divorce was instituted by Moses not because it was the plan of God, but because of the hardness or impertinence of man's hearts. In verse Matthew 19, we read,

They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

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 19:7,8 NKJV)

In The Living Bible it says, Jesus replied,

"Moses did that in recognition of your hard and evil hearts, but it was not what God originally intended."

(Matthew 19:8 TLB)

Principle 7- God's picture of the consequence confirms His conviction and position about the compromise. We see this in verses 9-11.

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man



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with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

But He said to them, “All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:”

(Matthew 19:9-11 NKJV)

Principle 8- The spiritual picture that marriage portrays is the most important part of God's actual commandment. This gives us His underlying purpose of His heart and the underlying plan behind the statement. First of all, marriage is God's portrait, etched in His own blood of a two-fold illustration, God the Father and His bride Israel, God the Son and His bride the church. Secondly, the relationship it depicts is permanent and cannot be broken by either party. It involves total commitment from both parties. It is not based upon satisfactory performance or worth, but on perfect love by one of the two parties.

An example of this is that God the Father chose to take as His bride, tiny, insignificant, unattractive Israel. Israel was someone He could love without limit. Israel, time and again, rebelled, abandoned Jehovah and rejected His Son. God's testimony was that He loved her, and He has patiently waited for her. Even today, she has returned home, but has not submitted herself to His authority. But the Scripture says that one day, she will, and He has not and will not forsake her. He is allowing her to “enjoy her freedom”. She thinks that she has power apart from Him. So patiently, He waits for when she will return.

Meanwhile, He sent His Son into the world to call out a bride that He has chosen. He, too, chooses the insignificant, seemingly unworthy. Not many noble, not many mighty, not many wise have been called. The bridegroom commits Himself for eternity to His undeserving bride, that's us. The bride comes to accept the groom and makes a commitment for life. The groom's Father, even knowing the heart of the bride, prepares a wedding feast to celebrate the eternal relationship in heaven. Though we, the bride, are continually unfaithful, at times committing grievous acts of spiritual adultery, double-minded, unstable in all our ways, the Scripture says that He will not leave us. He will not forsake us. He will not disown us.

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He will not allow us to leave Him. He has, rather, prepared for us His finest dwelling place. He is soon coming to bestow upon us all the treasures He owns. Marriage is supposed to say, "I love you." And love never faileth.

What the world's lie about cheap divorce says spiritually is, "If marriage is temporary, so is salvation." When we become unfaithful, God must become discontent, turn His back and say, "You didn't measure up. You didn't make me happy." So much for eternal security. It is a lie.

Principle 9- The final truth about divorce and remarriage has to do with Satan's smoke screen. The goal of God is not condemnation, but reconstruction. That is why those who have experienced divorce are not to be branded or relegated to second-class citizenship in the body of Christ. Those of you who have been through a divorce have a message. You have experienced the grace of God in ways that others have not. II Corinthians 1 says that you are equipped by

...God of all comfort,

who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

(II Corinthians 1:3b-4 NKJV)

Isaiah 58 says that you are to be

...restorers of people and rebuilders of the path to dwell in.

(Isaiah 58:12b)

You have a job to do. Your job is to strengthen the concept of the home by example and testimony. You are to encourage those who are passing through the floods of marital disillusionment to hang in there. Yours is a ministry of deep importance. Unusable? God forbid. You have been placed in a ministry, the ministry of home building.

For all of us who are married, divorced or otherwise, we have a responsibility. Our marriages say to the world and to our children, "Here is a picture of Jesus Christ and His church." Your partner may be as unlovable to you as we are to God, apart from Christ. He or she may be unfaithful, unappreciative, unresponsive. Your task is to assume the

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role of savior in your marriage. The greater the struggle, the greater the love. God did not promise you a perfect marriage, not even a happy one. He did promise you more grace than you will ever need. He calls us to show to the world that Jesus loves and loves and loves even when the object of His love is unlovable. That is the truth about marriage. Teach it to your children. Relearn it for yourself. Make it a conviction. The world desperately needs to understand it.

We have seen in this lesson that Satan desires to destroy the moral fiber of society by discarding the absolutes of Scripture as relative, then by bombarding God's center of life, the home. He wants to cheapen sex and marriage. In essence, he wants to make the home as a vital, continuing spiritual unit a thing of the past.

But Christians have another way of looking at it. I believe that Satan has overplayed his hand. His tactics, once so subtle and underground, are now blatant, overt attacks on the Word of God. The battle lines are no longer fuzzy. The issues are no longer vague. Satan thinks the church is down for the count of 9. I say the church is just waking up to the reality of the conflict. All across America, the church of Jesus Christ is experiencing an awakening of convictions. Satan's trumpet blast to surrender is the church's call to battle. Christians are taking God's stance on old issues.

The church is fed up with pornography. The church is fed up with drugs. The church is fed up with being blasted by humanistic philosophies of role switching and rampant divorce. Like a slumbering giant awakening from a decade of moral apathy, I believe God's people are about to reset the old standards and remark the old battle lines. I believe the rumblings are everywhere in modern Christianity. I think it is time that you and I awaken ourselves as well.

If we have to, turn off the television and turn on to the Word of God. If we have to, stay home from the movies and make the home the mainstay and center of life. Spend all of your time teaching your children. The Scripture tells us that when they arise, when they walk by the way, when they go to sleep, when they wake up in the morning, the Word of God

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and the truth of God that never changes should be on our lips and in our actions. Write it on the door posts of our houses. We need to write it on the gates. Every time our children look, every time they hear a word spoken, let them know that God is absolute truth.

Satan's lies are in the open now. We can see them for what they are. We can see what they produce. He has gone too far. He can't turn back. But now the church can have a clear choice, if you and I as part of the church of God take a clear stand. We know the problem. We need to pray to God that we will be a part.

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