

# Romans 7

Sunday 5/29/2011

Well, if you have your Bibles this morning, I would like to invite you again to turn to Romans chapter 7. Many, many years ago, when I was just a guy getting into the ministry, I heard an old preacher say one time that the job of every church is to basically find out what the real issues are in that particular culture by which that church exists, and then to do everything within its power through the Word of God and gear all its energy to penetrating its culture by meeting those needs. I never forgot that, and I think that is very good advice to any young pastor that is trying to build a church or anybody that is trying to minister.

I have been around the world many, many times over the years and preached in many, many different places and saw many, many different needs. I can attest today that in America, our need is not the needs of the rest of the world. Much of the world is starving. Much of the world is in poverty. Much of the world is in apostasy. There are places where there is unbelievable hardness toward the Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ. But America's need is more specific. America's need is, and I have said it many, many times jokingly, but it is true, America's need is America is an insane asylum, and it is run by the inmates.

America is in a desperate situation today. She is in that desperate situation because of her rejection of the Word of God. I have said many, many times, and another old preacher told me this, the only thing that men never learn from history is the fact that men never learn anything from history. We are at a place now in America where we see the results of that. I have talked to you many, many times about, and I made mention last week about the seven absolute laws in the Bible. I gave you two of them that pertain to us. One of them is the law of human collapse that is found in the book of Judges. The other one is found in Galatians chapter 6 verse 7, which is simply the law of sowing and reaping.

*Galatians 6:7*

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

America today is feeling the full force of the brunt of rejecting and violating those two laws for over 100 years now. Our job as a church is to reach out to broken people, hurting people. Like I said last week, our job is to just give out fire insurance. If you are unsaved here this morning, our job as a church is to ensure by the Word of God that you know that you can go to heaven and be protected against the hell fire of damnation of hell. If you are saved here today, we can take you to the Word of God and help you get the insurance that you need at the judgment seat of Christ. All your works will not be burned up, yet saved as so by the fire. That is our job.

My goal is to reproduce in you the burden that God has put into me to reach out to our own culture. That is why everything that we do, everything I try to accomplish with you, whether it be on Sunday morning, Thursday night, even through the Bible Basics class, my bottom line goal is to get you foundationalized in the Word of God and then build upon that foundation so that at some point in your life you can take a piece of this ministry before the Lord comes back and do something with it. Too many of God's people are running around like little rats in a maze looking

for the magical cheese at the end of the tunnel. It is not cheese, folks. It is gold, and it is in this book. At some point in our lives, we need to put aside the world and realize that God saved us for a purpose.

## I. The Three Ordained Institutions

This is the point of what we are trying to accomplish here in 1 Corinthians 7. You know that we have been coming through all of the books of the Bible showing how that Christ is portrayed in each book of the Bible. We now are in 1 Corinthians. We are going to finish out the New Testament. But we came to 1 Corinthians 7, and in the context of doing that in the books of the Bible, I have been kind of giving you the outline of the books. But when we came to 1 Corinthians 7, I told you that we need to clear off a little spot here and talk about some things because this is where America's issues really lie.

We have talked now and defined the three institutions that God has ordained, haven't we? We know what they are now. We talked about them again Thursday night. We now know that God designed a structured marriage. That is the first institution back in Genesis. Then we saw in Genesis 10 how God established the institution of civil government. Now we know why. Then we know that in the New Testament, God establishes the New Testament church. Any nation, any country, any person will rise and fall on what they understand and what they do with those three institutions because those are the things that God put into our lives to make the whole thing work.

So we have gotten into 1 Corinthians 7. We have been talking about that as the key chapter for the New Testament church on the issue of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. I am not by any stretch of the imagination trying to take this and make this a marriage course. That is not my goal. I mean, I know that when you teach anything, people will get out of it what they need, and that pretty much takes care of itself. But my real goal here, my goal is not to beat up anybody who may be through a bad relationship or multiple relationships. That is not my goal. My goal is to educate you from the Bible as members of this New Testament Bible-believing local church, that you understand the foundation of why our society has the problems that it has, that you are better equipped as the missionary out of this church to your job, where you work, to the people that you associate with, your friends, your relatives, your enemies, that you can take the Word of God and have a basis in your own life that when God sends them to you, we talked about the concept of a prepared sinner and a prepared servant.

I gave you a great example in Acts chapter 8 of the Ethiopian eunuch. There is a man that God prepared who was a sinner, but God had to have a prepared servant to get the Word of God to him. Personally, I think today, to be honest with you, God has much more prepared sinners than He has prepared servants because God's people will not do what they need to do today. I want you to know and understand that as we get into the Word of God today, I am trying to help you with this. I want you to take this material, learn it, understand the rules of engagement, so to speak, not engagement like marriage, but dealing with people and their problems, and come away as a viable force that when God has somebody who needs the truth, somebody who is hurting, somebody who has gone through a bad marriage, somebody who is in a bad marriage,

somebody who is not in a marriage at all yet, but they are headed for a bad marriage, that you can have the material to be able to use.

## II. Rules and Principles of Marriage

Now I want to begin reading here, and I am going to read down in the first 14 or 15 verses, and I want to try to go back to what we have already covered and add to it so it stays in a continuity form. But last week we laid down two great rules, and I told you that there are about 20 rules in this chapter that you want to remember. I showed you last week how that rule number one was that in the Old Testament there were grounds for divorce, but in the New Testament there are no grounds for divorce, and we talked about why that is. The second rule was we talked about that in understanding your call for God, in understanding the call for the ministry, that Paul says, as he says there, that it is good for a man not to touch a woman. He talks about the fact that God gives some people the gift to stay single, that they in their lives and their relationship with God can just do a better job single than they can married. That is not for everybody, not for most people. But it is a gift that everybody needs to look at and understand because Paul is laying all of this out.

Then I showed you three key verses here, verse 6, verse 10, and verse 12. I showed you by these verses how that the reason why most churches get so fouled up in their teaching on divorce and remarriage and all of the things that go along with it and marriage is because they keep going back to the Old Testament. They go back to Deuteronomy 24, Matthew chapter 5, Matthew chapter 19. I showed you from 1 Corinthians chapter 7 that this is the teaching. By those three verses, I showed you that Paul says things and gives extra revelation and conditions to the church that he never gave, God never gave to the nation of Israel. The reason for that is one is under law, one is under grace.

I told you I do not know of any issue that God deals with in the Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament that does not change simply because of the fact that one is under the Old Testament law and today we are under the New Testament grace. Why, when they die, did they even go to the same place? With Abraham's bosom, now we go straight to heaven when we die. So today as we move through this passage, again we will look and we will begin to put together in a more better way now that we have some of the principles down, and we will see some things that God gives to the church under grace that He does not give to Israel under the Old Testament. I think today is going to be an eye-opening time for you. I think it is going to pull a lot of things together, and then what we will do is we will move into the next realm and we will place some foundation down there and we will come back and tie all that together. That is how you are going to learn this chapter.

Alright, let us pick it up in 1 Corinthians 7:1.

*1 Corinthians 7:1-14*

*Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

*Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*

*Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*

*The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.*

*Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

*But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.*

*For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.*

*I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.*

*But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.*

*And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*

*But if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*

*But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.*

*And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.*

*For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*

Father, we do thank You and praise You today. Holy Spirit of God, open up our hearts, open up our ears and let us listen today as we talk about these great principles and for the purpose of helping people. Lord, it does no good to continue to hurt hurting people. We have to take people, that is part of our job, to look throughout our society for the downtrodden, for the ones that life has left in its dust, and to try to help them, where You established a relationship with God, be fruitful for God, and to do what God has called them to do. We all make mistakes. We are all fragile. We are all made of clay. But help us, Father, to be understanding and to be sympathetic and to reach out for those who really want help, to help them put their lives in a place where God can use them, no matter what their past has been. We will thank You now and praise You, in Jesus' name, for Your sake we ask it. Amen.

### III. The Problem of Lost Bible Definitions

Now, we have come up to about verse 9 and verse 10, and we are going to pick it up. We have discussed all this stuff and pretty much detailed it out, but we are going to pick it up here in verse 10 in just a moment. But you know, I think one of the major problems in Christianity today that makes people fall victim, that they fall victim to, and I have said this many, many times, but I keep saying it because it is such an empowering thought that you have got to get into your mind, and it takes a while. But I think the major problem we have that wrecks our culture, that makes our culture just upside down as far as Christianity is concerned, remember, the Bible says that Bible is likened to salt. Christians are likened to salt. As long as a Christian has the Bible in any society, it will preserve that society from decaying. But when the salt loses its savor, as the Bible says, when Christianity, when God's people lose their punch, when they lose the ability of the Word of God to help people in their problems, then everything is in disarray and begins to decay.

I think that the major problem that Christians have today is the fact that we have lost the important definitions of Bible concepts in the Bible. Now it is understandable how this would happen. You cannot not lose your Bible and not lose some things in that Bible. I preached a message a couple of weeks ago, a month ago, about the seven things you lose when you lose your Bible. You know now what those things are. One of the things that you lose when you lose the impact of the Bible and preachers preaching the Bible is you lose definitions of important things.

I learned this a long time ago, and I am forever hearing preachers doing this, and it just drives me crazy. How many times over the years I have heard some preacher get up and he starts his message by he wants to preach on a concept in the Bible. So he will get up and he will take the word faith, or he will take the word grace, or he will take the word this. He will get up and he will start his sermon by saying, "Now Webster's dictionary defines this word as," and then does the word. I have heard that all of my life, and I chuckle when I hear it, and it is just the way things are.

But you realize, and I am all for Webster's dictionary. I mean, we sell the 1828 edition back there, which was the first edition of Noah Webster's dictionary that was put back in print. Noah Webster was a saved Christian, if you do not know that. He wrote a lot of the textbook material for the school system when it started under George Washington. He was a great, great, great, saved man and a great founding father. You just never hear much about him. He wrote all of the textbooks for the early schools. All of those textbooks were based on God and the Bible. Of course Noah Webster put a dictionary out that was the first edition is what we have got back in print and we sell back there. Actually in many cases it gives you the Bible verse that defines what the word is. It is a pretty good dictionary.

But just like everything else, you go to a bookstore today and buy Webster's Collegian dictionary and you will not get any Bible definitions anymore. You see, the Bible is its own dictionary. The Bible defines itself differently. The Bible says that God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not my thoughts. Why would I think that I could go to Webster's dictionary and define something when Webster, on the best day of his life, still had problems thinking like God? Today, the dictionaries that you have are based on all of the minds today that are minds without God or without the Word of God. You do not go to a dictionary to find a definition of something in the

Bible. The Bible defines itself. The Bible is its own dictionary. The Bible is its own commentary. The Bible is built within itself by holy men of God who spake and were moved by the Holy Spirit of God.

I will give you an example. One of the greatest controversies in the world today, the Christian world, one of the greatest controversies in the Christian world is the issue of when does life begin and when does life end. People argue about it. The debates are endless. People kill each other over it. They fight over it. They argue over it. They break fellowship over it. It is probably the number one great controversy as far as the world is concerned. Does life begin at conception? Does life begin one month, two month, three month, four month? When does it begin? How about death? When you have no pulse, are you really dead? I mean, you have no heartbeat. Where do all these people come up when they say, "You know what, I died. The doctor said I was dead. I was clinically dead and I came back"?

I had a guy at the gym a couple weeks ago come over and tell me about a book he just read. This guy is as lost as a goose. He knows I am a preacher. He comes over and tells me about this book and how this guy died, came back, and he wants my opinion on it. This guy died and all this stuff, he stopped in heaven and everything like that. I did not have the heart because, you know, I am not as three-headed ogre as I seem to be, and this guy was a nice guy. I figured I would come out and I could not nail him right between the eyeballs, but I did not. I just said, "Well, I will have to read the book. You know, I would like to make my own judgment on those things." But I thought about this guy going on and on and on about this guy who died, went to heaven and came back. Yet everything he said about heaven was contrary to what the Bible said it was. See? Yet because this guy said, "I died, I went back," we all think he really died. You know why we do not know if he died or not? I know he did not die, but you know why we do not know? Because we do not know the Bible definition of death.

Let me tell you something. You are not dead until God says you are dead, but when God says you are dead, you are dead. You are not coming back. I do not know what to tell you. It is a thing where that is where people get today. I mean, it is crazy. I was going to say flat brain waves, but boy, I know a lot of people walking around have flat brain waves. So that is not a sign of death. But I am telling you, the Bible defines when life begins very clearly and it defines when life ends and it is death very clearly. But if you do not have a Bible that defines that, you are just off in la-la land. You do not even know what the definitions are.

We talked already in the same way. We saw how people get into something called marriage, never understanding the Bible's definition of marriage. You think marriage is just going down and going before a preacher, going before a civil judge, and you get a piece of paper, and you think, "Well, marriage is something that society does." You know better than that now based on our defining that. But that is where people think. They get into a marriage relationship without ever finding out what it really means.

We have really cracked some eggshells here in the last couple of weeks with strange concepts. I mean, what does it mean in the Bible? What is the definition of when the Bible says that husbands are supposed to honor their wives as a weaker vessel? What does that mean? I never

told you yet what it means because I am not. But what does that really mean? I will tell you what it is. Do not get in a fight with your wife and then keep your mouth shut driving down the road and she says, "Well, why are not you saying something?" Do not lean over to her and say, "Because I am honoring you as the weaker vessel." That will not work. I am telling you right now, some things you just learn by experience, boys, I am telling you.

We talked about due benevolence. What does that mean in a marriage? What does that mean? Well, to some, like I said last week, it means your monthly alimony check. That is what it means. I mean, we talked about not defrauding each other in a marriage. What does that mean? See, we get into something like marriage, but we never understand the definitions. The concept of marriage and divorce is one of the most mystifying areas in all of the Bible and all of the world. This is why our country, this is why Bible Christianity is in the mess that we are in today.

When Paul writes 1 Corinthians chapter 7, he writes it with the idea that the reader already has the biblical definitions of marriage and divorce already down. He writes from the aspect that we already understand that. For understanding what he is saying in this chapter is absolutely impossible without the right Bible definitions. For the whole chapter is built on this concept found in the Bible and its definitions.

#### IV. Defining Marriage Biblically

Now I want to take time this morning before we get into a couple of these principles here, and I want to talk to you about the defining of what marriage is. I think it is absolutely important. In defining what a marriage in God's eyes is, I think that is absolutely key today because we live in a world that has no concept of it. Now let me just preface my remarks by saying this. When I get done with this, there will be a tendency for some people who do not have a lot of brain cells still running around in their head that will take the position, as many pious Christians do, that by my stand on divorce and remarriage and what the Bible says about it—not my stand, but the Bible's stand—that I am somewhat undermining or somewhat brushing away the seriousness of a divorce and a remarriage or a divorce. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

What I am doing is emphasizing not just the issue of divorce, I am trying to show you how desperately wicked all sin is. I am not minimizing one, I am showing you that all sin, trying to get you to see that all sin before a holy God is sin. It is not just the ones we want to pick and then do our own thing with the other ones, it is understanding that God is holy, therefore we are to be holy, and when we are not holy and we sin against the holy God, it is sin. You have got to get that. Amen, brother. These white folks just do not get it, I will tell you what, they do not get it. You know, I will tell you, I preached at a black church years and years ago and a lady came up after me and she said, "You have got to have some black in you someplace." I have no problem with that. If you do not believe that, where do you eat my ribs tomorrow?

There are two books in the Bible that really define marriage for you, one in the Old Testament, one in the New Testament, and it is from these books that we begin to get the baseline and we begin to understand that marriage, yes, is a spiritual act that encompasses the three areas we talked about last week in due benevolence: the physical, emotional, and the spiritual. Yet at the

same time in God's eyes that marriage is a spiritual union, it is also a physical union that helps us understand how we should have our own relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let me just say something to you here. Gentlemen, do you know why, and do not get your tail down now like I am going to beat you up, I am not, I am going to get the ladies here in a second, but let me tell you something. I know, I know, I know, I always pick on the guys, well it is because you are ugly, I do not know what else to tell you. Bottom line is this, do you know why in the body of Christ in a perfect sense of Christianity, do you know why that a husband and wife should, in a perfect world, never have any real problems? Now I know we all have problems because we do not live in a perfect world, but even in the imperfect world that we live in, if you get this concept down, your marriage will be right in line with where the Bible wants to be. I am not saying you will not have moments of relapse, that you will not have issues that come up, but I am saying there will never be a time that you do not have the wherewithal to fall back on it. That is the problem.

There are two concepts you want to learn, guys and gals, in marriage. One is to react and one is to respond. When you have a potential firestorm right at your door that is going to explode, gentlemen, ladies, you have two roads to go. Your wife has a bad day and says something to you that hits you the wrong way. You can always hit her the right way if that is what you want to do, but that will not work very well. So what you, you have two choices, you can either respond to that or you react to that. Please, when your husband says something because he is tired and had a bad day and has just been a general jerk, you know, you have two choices. You can respond to that or you can react to that.

Now reacting is the knee jerk. You know, you say, "You are ugly," you say, "You are uglier." That is reaction. Responding is taking the biblical principles that absorb what somebody says to you. It is like, it is like being behind a big piece of thick jelly that they shoot bullets into. You are standing right behind it and the bullet hits it coming at 200,000 feet per second. But by the time it works its way through the jelly, it stops before it hits you. That is what Bible principles should do in your life about anything anybody says or does to you. If you are in a ministry, I have told you before, you better learn not to take it personal because people are going to say things, do things to purposely try to hurt you or try to destroy what God is doing. That is just the way that it is. How do you keep from, you respond. You let the biblical principles slow down whatever somebody says and by the time it gets into your heart, there is nothing there. That is the concept of reacting versus responding.

But let me show you how this thing in both cases. Let me show you how this thing works. Here is how God set it up. Marriage is a spiritual thing that is based on a physical union that shows us something about our relationship with Christ. By that, if you understand what I am about to say, this is why you should never really have any problems that you cannot work out. Now guys, if you are saved here this morning, you are God's child. No question about that. But you ever notice in the different ways you study your relationship with Christ in the Bible, you ever notice that you are not only a child of God but the Bible says you are a son of God but you are also the bride of Christ? You realize that in your relationship with Jesus Christ, guys, you are the weaker vessel with Him just like your wife is to you.

Now guys tell me all the time, "Well, I do not know how to relate to my wife. I do not know how to deal with my wife. I do not know how to deal with those three things. You know, emotional." You know why you do not? Because you have right in front of you the greatest model that you are really not too dialed into. If you are dialed into your personal relationship with Jesus Christ and you see yourself as the bride, the weaker vessel, and Him as the Bridegroom, the one that is going to make you strong and bears all your needs and meets your due benevolence and honors you as the weaker vessel, when you understand all of those things that He does to you as the weaker vessel, then you have a good model to look at your own relationship with God in Christ and then transfer those things right to your wife. Now that is the key to honoring her as the weaker vessel. Oh, I just gave it to you, did I not? Okay.

Now wives, study yourself through the Bible. Yeah, you are a child of God. Yeah, you are the bride of Christ, but you are also a son of God. See that thing? As being a son of God, if you look at it and study that relationship, then you have an understanding of how your husband's relationship should be with Christ. You should understand his needs just as he understands your needs. Through your own individual relationship with Jesus Christ, if that is working for you, if it is really doing what it is supposed to do, in a perfect world, there will be no issues that cannot be resolved. You know why I will not resolve any issues between me and God? Because it is certainly not God's problem. It is my problem. I do not want to. When you get into the perfect world and the imperfect world, when you get into the imperfect world, up comes the "I do not want to's." That is where it falls. But in its purest form, if you really love God and have the relationship with God that you need to have, and this is all I am about, I know I cannot make you perfect. That will happen when you get your glorified body, but I can, through the Word of God, make you better than you are. That is something you do not want to. See where it comes in?

The way that you understand your marriage in this due benevolence and honoring her as the weaker vessel, it is, guys, look at yourself between you as the weaker vessel and God. Does God treat you like you treat her? Does He throw you under the bus? Does He tell you how this or that? Does He cuss you out? Does He scream at you? He ought to. But He does not. You see the problem, it goes right back to what I said, does it not? The problem is misdefinitions and not understanding how the relationship, that is why I tell you all the time, your marriage relationship will only be as strong as your individual relationship with Jesus Christ. You understanding all of these things. So then you understand the concept. God does not react. You ever notice that? There is not one thing God does that He does not think about before He does. I mean, it is where the word long-suffering comes from. Is there anybody here that should not have been killed last week? Well, the very fact that you and I should have been killed and have not been killed shows you that God does not act or react. He responds. He is going to kill you tomorrow. He is going to kill you later. I saw this T-shirt out there, one of these shows I go to, I almost bought, had this big clown face on it and it was distorted. It was a clown, but it was one of those terror horror movie clowns. And it says, "I like you, so I will kill you last." God does not react. He responds to us. When God does react, it is after, "Come let us reason together, saith the Lord." How many times did God allow us to go to a church or a Bible study to hear some idiot get up there and take the Word of God and clean our clocks when God all the time should be waiting for us around the

corner of I-435 with a big old semi stalled in the road and put us up in the pearly gates? He does not. He does not at all.

Now let us talk about the concept of marriage. Just define from the Bible what a marriage is. I do not know if you know this, but the whole Bible is built around two events. Do you know that? The main event is the second coming of Christ. That is the theme of the Bible. But you know what shares that main event? Because there are two major events in your Bible and your Bible is built all around these two. The first one is the Lord's coming back. You know what the second one is? The second one is the marriage of His Son. That Bible is built around a marriage. You know, most people do not even understand. They do not even know how to put it together. You go over to Ephesians chapter 2 verse 19 and chapter 3 verse 15 and it talks about the family of God. They do not even have a clue what that means. They just think, "Well, that all means we are all in the family of God." Well, obviously we are all in the family of God, but there is a little more to it than that because the concept of marriage that you and I engage in was not set up by man's concept of "let us set it up and make it happen." The concept of marriage that you and I enjoy and understand is based on that big marriage that some day is coming in the Bible. It is the marriage of Christ being married to His bride, the church.

All through the Bible, you will find it in Matthew chapter 25. You will find it in Revelation chapter 19 verses 7 through 8. You will find it in Matthew chapter 22. You will find it all through those things that there is a wedding and God is inviting people to come to the wedding. In Matthew chapter 25, we are smack dab in the middle of the Tribulation Period. He is sending out the 144,000 Gentiles, the Jews, the priesthood of Gentiles. Now what is he preaching? He is preaching there is going to be a wedding in the air in the sweet, sweet by and by. You do not want to miss it. He says in Matthew chapter 25 with a great parable on the 10 virgins, five were wise and five foolish. He comes down and he says, five got it, five did not get it. The five that got it, they went with him to where? To the marriage. There is a marriage coming. The fact that God's people do not know that today, the fact that preachers are not preaching that today, it is a disgrace. There is a wedding coming and that wedding is the wedding of God's Son to His bride. Ladies and gentlemen, if you are saved this morning, you and I make up that bride. The rest of your Bible from before the law, during the law, into the Tribulation Period and into the Millennium are people being invited to come to that wedding. They are the guests.

Now here is where we get fouled up. In the Bible, there are no wedding ceremonies. In the Bible, there are no vows. There are no "I do's," "I will's," "I won't's." There are no rings. We have that today because some place along the line. Oh, I know. And I have heard this all the time. "Now, but I have been John chapter 2, Jesus, He went..." I have even had people, it talks about in John chapter 2, there was a wedding in Cana. I have even had some people try to say that Jesus performed that ceremony. I have taken them take that passage and they try to make that passage a wedding ceremony and try to justify what they do today. The poor, deluded idiots do not even have a clue, cannot even read the passage. That marriage there in Cana, do you ever notice that wedding took place on the third day? You know what the third day represents in your Bible? The third day represents the day Jesus comes back and we go to be with Him and that marriage in John 2 is a picture of the marriage supper of the Lamb. That is why when the guy drank the grape

juice that Jesus turned into it, the guy said, "Man, I have never tasted anything like this before." That is because you got a taste of what is coming down the line. That is what that is. They do not even know that.

There are no wedding ceremonies in the Bible. There are no vows, there are no rings, there are no "I will's." We have that today because somebody down the line wanted to put a Bible context to weddings. I think it is a good thing. I am not fighting it. I think you just have to understand it. When you come through the Bible and you see this family of God coming from the Old Testament to the New Testament, you are going to find all the attendants to the wedding. You know what a wedding is? Whoever made the wedding concept based it on the Bible of what they understood about this family of God. So you have a bride, that is the church. You have a bridegroom. The bride is always in white. That symbolizes the purity of her being a virgin because the Bible says the church is a virgin. She has always got a veil. Now she does not wear a veil because she just robbed a bank and had not had time to take it off. She wears a veil because she is a type of the church and the Bible says the church is a what? Thank you very much. So she wears a veil. She wears that veil all the way down.

Then you know, in most traditional weddings, the wedding party, you have a bridegroom. That is Christ. You have the church. That is the bride. Then you have the friend of the bridegroom. That fits into the Bible to that crowd around John the Baptist. John the Baptist is called the friend of the bridegroom. He is the best man. You have all these different things. You have your wedding attendants. You will find those in the book of Psalms. You will find them in the book of Psalms where the wedding is there and all the attendants are there too. It is not your wedding. What is my wedding? But it is the wedding that is coming that our weddings are a picture of.

Traditionally on the day of the wedding, the bride is not supposed to see the groom. I know a lot of this stuff does not hold anymore, but it was a time when it was real special stuff. She said, "Oh, I cannot let him see me." You know why? Because the first time he is supposed to see her is when the music starts, everybody stands up, all the attendants are there. What happens? The bride in white with a veil on her face comes to the bridegroom, a picture of the rapture. That is why traditionally they roll down the white thing. They have little kids coming down throwing flowers. They represent demons in the Bible. Because they always screw up the wedding. They will get right in the middle and they will say, "Hey, I am not going any farther. I am only five years old and I do not listen to my parents or anything. Why should I listen to that guy who told me to walk down the aisle?" See, I mean, that is what they do. People get into everything. Oh, that is a picture.

But the Bible tells us that marriage in God's sight is a flesh thing. It is flesh joining flesh. It is the sexual union between two people in Christ that understand the concept.

*Genesis 24:67*

*And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.*

There is no ceremony there. Now, let me clear this up since we are here because this always comes up. Let me clear up the area of what we find today in many cases, not so much anymore, is the idea of common law marriages. That is where people just live together without any formal certification or any license or no ceremony. They decide, "Well, in many ways, people, they think they are getting married in a pure biblical sense." They do not understand that in the Bible for the New Testament, God does not recognize common law marriages. Romans chapter 13 makes it clear that you have to follow the rule of law of civil government. They are ordained of God. That is the second institution that He set up.

There are two issues with that. The first issue is civil government. You are not recognized as legally married. I know that the government, you get a piece of paper, does not make you married, but the piece of paper is the basic legal formality that says that you are married. So you get people that say, "Well, we just want to live together in the purest sense of the Bible. We do not want to go through all of that." Well, you know what? The second aspect is your testimony. Unsaved people do not see that. Unsaved people do not see that. You get two people who are saved and say, "We are just going to live together in common law marriage." And they go, your unsaved friend does not see it that way. They see you are just shacking up like everybody else in the world. That is what they see. You may understand it, but they do not understand it. That is why the Bible says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." That is why the Bible says, "Let not your good be evil spoken of." You have a testimony.

I have had people that thought, "Well, I can drink a beer whenever I want," you know, and they are at a restaurant someplace and they are drinking a beer and a friend walks up, it is a Christian and it does not know that. Then they worry for the next 15 minutes asking their apology and saying, "I am sorry." Nothing wrong with it. What are you sorry about? People are strangers. Are you sure stupidity is not a spiritual gift? We left that about four weeks ago. You see, it is a clear case. Legally it opens you up to all kinds of issues because most states do not recognize it. So that you cannot get any benefits. You cannot do this. You cannot do that. Biblically, it just throws you right into the cesspool of the world. People do not make the distinction. They do not. People do not know you are a Christian because you say you are a Christian. This is another great mess we are in. People do not believe you are a Christian because you say you are a Christian. People believe you are a Christian because you do what the Bible says and you live like a Christian. Remember the theme of this book? "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and not do the things that I say?" You have got to get past this. This idea that I am a Christian, I can live like hell because I am a Christian. The world does not see it that way. You are not a Christian because you say you are a Christian. You are a Christian because you do what a Christian does and a Christian is to separate himself from the world. I do not know what to tell you. I do not know what to tell you. But that is where it is. I am not mad at anybody. I am just telling you.

It is one of those things where you have a problem with it when you do not put it this way. In the Bible, marriage is never a piece of paper from a courthouse, from the civil government. It never is in God's sight. Marriage is when the flesh joins flesh. Now I will show you this. Take your Bible. Turn over to Matthew chapter 19. While you are turning there, I might as well tell you this. So you get this down. God does not recognize the marriage of two unsaved people. I do not

know where we got this concept. I do not know where we got the concept that God would... I mean, can you get to heaven without being saved? Not to my knowledge you can. Well if marriage is a picture of the body of Christ in a relationship and it is something that God set up and ordained for His church, if you are not members of the church, the body, if you are not saved, what good is marriage? An unsaved God does not recognize the marriage of unsaved people. They are not His children. They are of their father, the devil, and the lust of their fathers they will do. That is why they do. That is why a Christian should not do what the world does. But they do.

Now look at this verse. This is a great verse. This is my favorite verse in the Bible today. I told you a couple of weeks ago the context of Matthew chapter 19 verses 1 through 9 was the Pharisees coming to Him and tempting Him on the issue of divorce. Remember that and I showed you how that this is where a lot of most Baptist churches go to prove that it has nothing to do with it. They are not coming to Him asking Him for truth. They are coming to Him to try to get Him to make a mistake and trying to trick Him. All up through chapter 19 verses 1 through 9 that goes back and forth. Well then His disciples get confused. Because Jesus has basically given them an impression that a man, if this is true, that a man should never get married. So that picks it up in verse 10.

*Matthew 19:10-12*

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

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

*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.*

Now that is a great verse. It is a definitive verse. It is a revealing verse. Now the issue in verse 10 here is the fact, again, I said so you get it. What about this thing married? Maybe a guy should not get married. He said not everybody can accept that, but a eunuch can. Then He gives you three kinds of eunuchs. That would be born that way. That is born with the inability to have sex. Made that way by men. That would be castration and mutilation. Made themselves that way for the kingdom of God's sake. They abstain from sex. Now He just told you that it is impossible for a eunuch to get married. That is the example. Yet any eunuch on this planet, any time, any place, anywhere, can go through a marriage ceremony, can take a vow, and he can take rings. But what he cannot do is enter into a sexual union. You know why? Because in the Bible, in God's eyes, that is what marriage is.

Do you see the obvious issue that brings up for the pious brethren that do not treat divorce like any other sin? Again, I am not minimizing divorce. I am trying to uplift and show you how bad sin is, but to the holy God, divorce is just another one. It is like any other sin you confess and put under the blood and move on and pick up your life after God.

Now look at this. Oh, this will kill you. Turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 16.

*1 Corinthians 6:13*

*Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.*

*1 Corinthians 6:19*

*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

*1 Corinthians 6:15*

*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

What? Know ye not? Now I told you last week, or I think it was Thursday night, there are phrases in the Bible you ought to study. I told you I think the other night every time the Bible says "take heed," you ought to go through a concordance and find all of those and separate them out. You are going to get a great study of things that we need to take heed of. One is "he that hath ears let him hear." That is a great one. One of them I told you already is there are seven things in the Bible that the New Testament says we are not to be ignorant of. But here is another one, and this is a great one too. "What? Know ye not?" That is a good one. Because most of the things we do not know is what he is saying here. "What? Know ye not?" He did in verse 15.

Now what do you do with that? Now he gives you some good advice in verse 18.

*1 Corinthians 6:18*

*Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.*

Why? Because the child of God then breaks the relationship he has with Christ and he joins that relationship to the physical attraction that he put it to, whether it be his girlfriend, whether it be some hooker, whatever it is. When you do it, you have joined your flesh from God to that. Now this is a result of a society that dumps the Bible, dumps the principles, lives like hell, does what they want to do, justifies it with God.

Every time I think it is, I think of David's sin with Bathsheba. I think how you go through there, you ever notice how David had three or four plans to cover his bases? He is just like you and me. He had three or four plans to cover it. Finally the best plan worked was when he could not get Uriah to go home and be with his wife sexually so they could blame the baby on that. Finally when there was no other way, he gave a letter to a runner to Joab to put him in the forefront. David had him killed. So, and it is a great, at the end of this chapter, I forget what chapter, it is a great thing all. I love when he says this. David, he is sitting up there in his palace, got word back, Uriah died. He thinks he has got all the bases covered. He thinks that nobody knows about it. He thinks he has got the thing all laid out and worked out, all covered up and all smoothed up. Boy, how smart he is. Then the last verse in that chapter says, "But the thing displeased the Lord." Yeah, we think because God does not come down and whack us right now, we got away with it.

Again, I am not preaching this to make anybody feel bad. I am telling you, where you make a mess out of life, you get it right with God, you put it under the blood. That is the end of it. You move on with a fresh start. But I am telling you, but we live in a Christianity that cares so little about keeping your body pure for God. The lack of knowledge on biblical aspect of marriage. What? Know you not? When you have a sexual encounter in an out of fellowship state, you are married to that personality in the eyes of God. Hey, all my ministry. I have known young men at just proud churches for young ladies. Their whole life they went through from church to church, to place, finding out the hot young girls, picking them up, being nice to them, telling them what a great Christian they are, giving them some phony example, and then fornicating with them. There was silence in heaven about the space of a half an hour.

Now do you see why the pious brethren, like we talked about earlier, have such a tough time with the Bible, why they want to stay away from this? You see why they like to hang out back there in Matthew chapter 19 and Matthew chapter 5? And make up, you know, when you get a divorce and then dump on you the penalty that you have to stay single the rest of your life, and when you do get married and you live in adultery the rest of your life. You see why they like to do that? I will tell you why, because if the truth were known, every one of those pious pastors, teachers and deacons, have been married and divorced multiple times in their lifetime. I will take it one step forward. We are like a 600-pound man on ice. We are going to go through here in just a minute.

*Matthew 5:28*

*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

You do not even have to have the act. You can divorce your wife today when you take, you know what, you know what, you know what it is, do you not? Marriage is flesh joining flesh. Now when you join that person in that flesh and then you take it away from that flesh, this is why we are in the mess we are in. It is a heart attitude. You know how wicked our heart is. Now this is the careless lifestyle without any principles that God's people have today that come up with all the little plans, everything except living a holy godly life. The Bible takes the position clear and plainly. Every relationship you had after you are saved is a marriage. Tough, huh?

*1 Corinthians 6:15*

*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

So God gives the relationship of a biblical marriage so you too can have that in Christ, the engagement and the marriage. He that is joined to a harlot is one flesh. I do not know what else to tell you. So a marriage then is flesh joining flesh.

## V. Defining Divorce Biblically

Now the definition of divorce from the Bible, let us get this one. The definition of divorce from the Bible, this is important because again, this whole chapter is built on these two Bible

concepts. If a marriage is joining flesh based on the heart attitude, good or bad, then a biblical divorce is when flesh leaves the flesh based on the attitude of heart. Not when you get your divorce papers, not when it is in God's mind, it is the attitude of heart. Marriage in God's sight is never a piece of paper. It is never in a divorce and God's sight is never a decree from a judge. That may end it legally. That may give you the ability to move on or do whatever you have got to do legally, but it is a divorce when a man and a woman simply say in their heart, "I do not love you anymore. I love somebody else or I love something else." You have got the wrong attitude, it is there.

That is why the Bible says, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." That is why the Bible says, "Set your affections on things above." That is why the Bible says, 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 16, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." It is like leaving a church. People leave churches all the time. But you always watch the pattern. You can see the pattern. We talked about it Thursday night. Guy says, "Well, I am leaving the church." It is June. "Well, I am going to leave the church." He is gone. Somebody says, "Did so and so leave the church?" "Yeah." "Did he leave last week?" "No." "When did he leave?" "Oh, he left a year ago." "Well, I saw him here through the last year. He just left this week." "No, he left last year." "No, no, he just left this week." "No, his body left this week. His attitude of heart went left a year ago. It just took a year for the body to catch up to where his heart already was." You can understand that, cancer. That is just the way it goes. Well, it is the same way here. The exact same way.

That Bible is in Jeremiah chapter 17 verse 9, that our hearts are deceitful, desperately wicked above all things. Who can know it? It is what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 5, that we are casting down imaginations and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. We would not get into these little concepts that destroy Christianity and then walk around thinking how good we were a Christian on Sunday morning when you are fornicating on Saturday night.

The model for divorce in the Bible is found in the Old Testament with God and Israel. Israel is called God's wife all through the Old Testament. Now watch this. She commits adultery against Him by going after other nations and other gods. What was the first commandment of the 10? "Thou shalt have no other God before me." See? If I tied in there that "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart with all thy mind and all thy soul," those two are snapped right there together. So based on Israel's adultery and fornication against God, now let me explain this. Most people do not know the difference between fornication and adultery. Preachers do not have a clue today because they do not know the Bible. I am going to give you the two definitive verses on it. You already got them really.

1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 18 tells you that fornication always has to deal with your body, the physical part of it. Matthew chapter 5 verse 28 tells you that adultery always has to do with your heart. You see they are connected but they are not the same. There are two aspects. It is like transgress and trespass. You transgress against God but you trespass against man. You fornicate with your physical body but your heart goes along with it. You commit adultery with the one that you should have that one heart with. That is the way it works.

So you see that based on Israel. This is what it is. Look at this. God took Israel as His wife. You want to get these down. You will find this in Jeremiah chapter 1 through 14 and Isaiah chapter 54 verse 1. God looked at all the other nations, chose Israel and said, "She is going to be My wife." Took her as His wife. She takes care of Him or He takes care of her, gives her due benevolence, does everything. She enters here as the weaker vessel, wipes out her enemies. All the models are there, guys. What did she do? She committed adultery in her heart with other gods and then she committed fornications with the harlots of those nations. You find that in Numbers chapter 25. You find the spiritual adultery in Ezekiel 16:33, the book of Hosea chapter 2 verse 16 and chapter 2 verse 10.

So based on that what does God do?

*Jeremiah 3:8*

*And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

*Isaiah 50:1*

*Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.*

Now see that thing? He says your iniquities and your transgression. Now you know what you have got? God is divorced. You see when you take the position of these idiotic, stupid, ridiculous preachers who know nothing about the Bible, nothing about the family of God, the concept of God and Israel and the bride and the church and they go out this thing, take in Matthew chapter 5 and Matthew chapter 19 and beating everybody over the head and now what do you have to do? God as we stand here today is divorced from the nation of Israel. What should we let Him do? See, this is what happens to a society that loses its Bible. You lose your Bible on Monday, you lose your morality on Tuesday, you lose your mind on Wednesday.

God joined Himself to Israel not spiritually but literally through a piece of ground, Jerusalem. You go to Isaiah chapter 62 verse 4, you will find there that the Bible says that God and Israel are married to the land. You know why? Here comes another kicker because in the Old Testament in the literal physical kingdom of heaven, God joined Himself not spiritually to Israel but physically to Israel through the land, Jerusalem, the land of Palestine. In the New Testament, God joined His Son spiritually to a body in the kingdom of God but also through a city, New Jerusalem which is the abode of the church, you see? In the Old Testament, it is a physical thing. In the Old Testament, it is a physical marriage based on a physical kingdom, based on a physical piece of ground. In the New Testament, it is a spiritual concept based on a spiritual relationship, based on a spiritual New Jerusalem. Can you not get that?

The model of divorce and marriage will always be based on our attitude of heart toward God and His Word and then the relationship. You know, God wants you to find a wife or a husband that together, this goes into the concept. That is why marriage should only be in the church. That is

why marriage should only be laid out within the church because it is through this body that you are going to come and to become one. I told you last week that the aspect of the two becoming one in God's sight, but it takes two to make a marriage. So that second person of that marriage after the two become one becomes the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then together you become a help meet to each other to do whatever God has called you to do together. God will bring people into your world and together will put you together through the Word of God into that mindset that you will get together after you are married in that spiritual concept, you will begin to do what God wants you to do together. He has got a plan for you. That is the whole concept of marriage.

That is why when we get to the judgment seat of Christ and get through that and get to the marriage of the Lamb, it will be the final consummation that when eternity starts, now we are going to do within this body exactly what God had planned for us to do. This is all a test tube down here. We think life means so much that this is all there is. This is nothing compared to what is coming. We get focused on the now and we forget what is coming.

I preached a number of years ago that proved my point. I was up in New York and I am sitting on the platform and the pastor leans over and we had talked the night before about a couple that had gotten divorced in their church, very traumatic, very bad, just a bad mess, just terrible. It was a very messy thing and he was asking me some things and we were trying to help him a little bit, you know, when he was talking. So that Sunday morning I am going to preach. We are sitting there and he leans over to me and he says, "We have got a little presentation here. It will not take us long." He says, "And you will be up." I said, "It is fine." So we had this dear sweet couple come up and they recognized them for being married for 60 years together. This was your typical nice couple. They probably got saved when they were young, came to church all their life, got married, stayed together, did everything they were supposed to do, you know, as far as marriage, husband, wife, had kids, raised their kids, came to church all their life, tithed, just nice people. But I talked to him later without him knowing what I was asking. They were just your typical normal Christians who basically went to church all their life and never did anything for God.

I sat there that morning and I watched based on what we talked about last night, based on this nice sweet gray-haired couple, giving her roses and him whatever he gave him, a shotgun I think, whatever it was, gave him these things and everybody standing up and applauding and glad they were married for 60 years. I thought to myself, "Really, really, let me ask you a question. What is the difference? What difference does it make if this couple last night got blown up and got divorced and killed each other and shot themselves to pieces and this couple over here stayed married for 60 years if neither one of them fulfilled what God called them to do? What difference does it make?" You think because you stay married for 75 years, that is a good marriage? I mean, a good marriage is what did you do with everything God gave you? Do you understand why God put the marriage together in the first place? That is the key. Thinking you can have some kind of marriage outside of that that is going to be meaningful, not in this world. The devil is going to throw you under the bus and back up and run over you three or four times.

## VI. New Testament Guidelines for Separation

Now with all this in mind, let us look at 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 10 here very quickly. I want to get at least one or two of these rules in today. Oh, and this is all foundational stuff. The stuff that I am about to say would not make any sense to you at all, but I did not tell you what I just told you. This is the stuff you have got to know.

Now he says in verse 10,

*1 Corinthians 7:10*

*And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*

Alright, rule number three in our coming down through. We have got a lot of concepts, but here is rule number three. Rule number three is a saved woman in a relationship when you have problems she is never to depart. The saved person is under the, "and to the married I command not I but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband." Now that is the concept. The wife is not to depart from her husband. Now I am going to get into that in a minute.

This verse is very, very interesting for when I look at this thing, notice he tells the wife, he says, "And to the married I command yet not I, but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband." Notice he does not say anything about the husband departing from the wife. He just tells the wife not to depart from the husband. I think that is very instructive. You know why that is? The command is to the weaker vessel, the woman. You know why that is? Because God understands that she is the most fragile one in the relationship. She is the one that is going to have the fragile issues depending on the husband, but that is that it is not one word to the husband told not to leave. You know why? Because he is the type of Christ and Christ would never leave His bride. I may walk out on Christ a thousand times. I am the weaker vessel. He will never walk out on me. If you are Christ in a relationship, that is why you are not told to leave. Christ would never leave. In a relationship, you and I are to be Christ. See how that thing works? I am telling you, you want to meet when you get into 1 Corinthians chapter 7, it will fillet you. I as a bride, the weaker vessel, I may leave Christ a thousand times, but Christ, my husband, will never leave me. He will never forsake me. He will never walk away from my relationship with Him, but I as the weaker vessel will walk away from my relationship with Him. So you know what? Preachers every Sunday, Holy Spirit of God, every chance that can, everybody, what they do will always tell me the weaker vessel, do what is right. That is what he is saying. That is why there is no instruction to the husband. He takes for granted that the husband is going to do what the Bible says. You are Christ in a relationship of Ephesians chapter 5, and Christ would never desert His bride. He would never depart from His body. You see, this is the instruction given to the New Testament church. This is why we have the complete and total breakdown of the New Testament guideline for us as God's people in His body. Marriage is built on these biblical principles, not in complicated. As I already said, get four or five definitions of good Bible principles, put them into your life and it will work for you.

Rule number four. Now, he just said, the wife is not to depart from her husband. Then he does a strange thing. He reverses what he just said.

## *1 Corinthians 7:11*

*But if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*

Now, he reverses it. He just said, "Let her not depart." And then he said, "But if she does depart." Now, in the New Testament, this is the new stuff in the New Testament. What you have here is the New Testament concept of what we call a New Testament biblical separation. Sometimes, sometimes the situation gets so volatile. Sometimes the situation gets so bad because of the law of sowing and reaping, compounding effect years and years and years in neglect, years and years and years of nobody fulfilling their role. Hey, I have been in situations when you cannot be in the same room without... I had one couple years ago that was so bad that every time he would come and see me, one time I thought I would just play a joke on him. I put a striped referee shirt on with a whistle. They got my point. They could not talk about anything. Everything just went volatile. Nobody could... It went too far. It got too bad. There are some circumstances in some situations where you let it go too long, it gets too volatile. The only thing... The wife, she is the fragile vessel. Sometimes I have had him, heard him, sat him, say in some circumstances, "Look, I cannot stay in this thing any longer and not hate him and not want anything ever to do with him again." Sometimes they have to come to the point where you have to have a biblical separation.

But that needs to be operated under the guise of a New Testament local church. You do not just do that on your own. You need to come under the watch care of a church and say, "Look, this is my situation. This is where I am at. I am struggling with this. I am not separating from him to get a divorce. I am separating him to go to neutral corners so I can get some space where we can kind of talk about this or see what this is. Maybe it will not work out. Maybe too much damage is done."

I used to work at the Hoover Company in North Canton, Ohio. We made washing machines, vacuum cleaners, mostly washing machines. So if you got a Hoover washing machine, and it is an old one, there is probably something I had to do with. I do not know why it does not work very well. I used to take parts to the line. I worked in this section. It was a warehouse that had steel shelving going up 30, 40 feet in a year. Had to put a fork truck all the way up on those high skids and pick them up and bring them up. Thousands and thousands of parts. Every part you could imagine. I used to get so frustrated with people screaming for parts and screaming for this. I hated this warehouse. One time I played with this idea. I was sitting way back in the warehouse. It was on break. I mean the warehouse was three times longer than this building. It was shelves up with parts everywhere. I walked down there and I thought to myself, "Man, you know what I would like to do just to get even with this place? I would like to just start ripping stuff off the shelves and knocking barrels of this over and knocking this over and pushing this down and throwing this down. Just, whoa, just say, 'Yeah, you want these? There, go get them.' And throw this stuff down there and throw these over here. Throw these over here and throw it out of there. Throw them over here and run down." When you all got down to the end, I was sitting back there and I just thought to myself, "You know what? The only way out is back the way I came in." The only way out of that corridor after I made the big mess that I had made was to pick up the pieces myself so I could get out of the mess that I made. It was a very long

corridor. Alright. Alright. Sometimes that is all you can do is pick up the pieces. But they have got to be picked up. Somebody has to pick them up.

Sometimes getting away from the situation is so volatile that any minor contact erupts into a major battle. Sometimes there is physical abuse. We do not have any cases of physical abuse in our church because I do not, I mean, that I know of anyhow. But I just tell you this, lady, if you are having a situation where your husband beats you, put him in jail. Put him in jail. Shoot him first and then put him in jail. Put him in jail. I do not want to tell you, no husband should ever hit his wife. You probably want to hit your wife. You know why you have got some serious issues? I mean, get your dog a little biter or something else to get away from it. But do not, a man who beats his wife and hits his wife because he has got angry needs to go to jail. I do not want to tell you. Do not come to the counseling because I will just tell you, "You call the police or get out of here. I do not even want to talk to you. I will beat you up. Get out of here." That is the only lesson you will learn. But they do not do it. You know why? Because your desire is to the weaker. Something like that, when they get into those situations, even though it is a rough thing and it is a bad thing, they take some kind of security in that. Put his butt in jail. Put him in jail. Put him in jail. Big jail, long jail, no short jail, small room. No bathroom privileges. Case of beer. I am telling you, but sometimes it gets that way. Women have got to get out.

Sometimes there are drugs or alcohol and a guy comes home staggering drunk. He is involved. You are going to just let that go on forever. If the Bible says you do not separate for divorcing, you separate to get out of the situation to get the protection that you need. That is something you have done. Next week, I am going to show you when that happens how the church then operates. Sometimes the church has to become a mediator. Sometimes somebody has to get in the middle of it. You do not separate to get the divorce. Now, I have known people that did separate to get the divorce, but that is because it was too late. I am not passing judgment on however you have done whatever you have done. Do not misunderstand me. My philosophy is and always will be help you where you are at, but the separation has to be done by the body.

You see, the wife can biblically separate from the husband to be reconciled, but the husband can never separate from the wife. It goes back to the thing. You and I are Christ. Christ does not separate Himself from the body. Does Christ get out of fellowship with me sometime? Yeah. I mean, I am not part of His body. Absolutely not. You just cannot take that concept anywhere. You see, the Lord knows better than I do what we have talked about today. In a perfect world, there is no reason for divorce within the body of Christ. I know that. Everything I am giving you, I am not giving you to say, "You should have done it this way, stupid." I am not doing that. I am doing it so you can learn. So when you get into these scenarios with somebody at work that you know how and understand the basis of what you are dealing with. I really want you to understand this concept about keeping your body holy because we live in a world that just throws that out the window today and then just smiles like, "Boy, me and God are just fine."

In a perfect world, there is no reason for divorce within the body of Christ, but we do not live in a perfect world and divorce happens. So the Lord through the church makes a provision for the person no matter how bad the situation begins. He makes a way to do what is right even if the marriage cannot be solved or saved. It does not matter. There is always something you can do in

any circumstances. I do not care how bad it is. I have never met a circumstance that was so bad that there was not something that the person could not do. The problem is when you get so far into it, you do not want to do it or it is too late when you want to do it. But that is where you have got to take it. The bottom line is, you know, God will take you where you are at. Your marriage will together will only be as strong as your individual relationship with Christ. That is, you know, that is the example you have all the way through here that Christ, she is the weaker vessel and Christ, He is the church.

You know, I am asked all the time, you know, women come in and they have problems in their marriage and they have issues and a guy does not seem and he wants to do what is right. These are real things that people are faced with. They will come in and they will say, "You know, I feel like getting out of this thing. I feel like there is no hope in it. I feel like there is this, there is that, but I do not know what to do." I never tell people what to do. That is not my job. My job is not to tell people what to do. My job is to show you what your options are in the Bible. I cannot tell you what to do because I do not have to live through what you decide to do. You have got to do it. I do not give that kind of advice in dealing with people. I will show you what the biblical principles say. I will show you the cause and effect of which way you go. I will show you what your options are, what are your good options, what are your bad options and the end result of all of them. But that is where my job ends.

But I will tell people this. Look, you may be in a worse situation. You may not want to get out. You may want to get out wherever you find yourself. The bottom line is this. I commend you the fact that you want to do what is right. But I have got to tell you this. Unless your husband decides to get what he needs to get, to be what he needs to be, to do what he needs to do, and he gets into that book and he changes who he is to be what God wants him to be. You can have all the tears and all the desires and all the hopes and all the world, but it will never change the situation you are in because the woman does not have the power to change the situation. Just like I cannot change what God is doing and what Christ is doing, the woman, the weaker vessel cannot change the man. God did not set it up that way. You can beg him. You can cry. You can weep. You can ask him. You can write him little notes in his lunchbox. You can put things in his apple. You can put razor blades. You can put all kinds of things in there. You can do whatever you want to do. But at the end of the day, you cannot make Christ do what is right. You should do what is right because you are Christ.

We will hold up there. Two more principles to put down. Hope I did not ruin your lunch. Let me say this in closing as we pray. I say it again. Every head bowed and every eye closed. This message was designed in no way to pass judgment on anybody. There is not a time in my world that I am not dealing with somebody and something that I am preaching about. That is never my intent. My intent is to tell you, as I have said all through this, that no matter what state you are in, I do not care. I am here to help you. If we can fix it, then we will fix it. If we cannot fix it, then we will do what we have got to do. I cannot be responsible for what shape it is in. I can only be responsible for what you bring me, how fixable it is. But no matter what shape it is in, I say again, there is always something you can do. There is always something you can do no matter what situation you are in. Most of you are doing very well and doing whatever you can do.

But let me ask you this. Maybe you are here this morning and you heard what I said. It was a tough message, but there are some tough issues. I hope that if you have got problems in your life or problems in your personal life or problems in your marriage, this message was designed to show you the light at the end of the tunnel. If you are here today and you are a husband and, you know, I have seen many, many couples come in that were lost and got saved and boy, I mean, their husbands and wives picked up the concept really, really quick. And boy, just turn that thing around. It can happen. I have seen people come in with all kinds of problems. It does not matter. Christ makes the difference. The Word of God and its principles are the key to everything in your life.

Now with every head bowed and every eye closed, let me ask this question. Maybe you are here this morning and you do not know for sure if you died right now you would go to heaven. Maybe that is the whole problem. You never really trusted Christ as your own personal Savior. I want you to know that God will save you this morning. If you are a husband and wife or you are somebody here by yourself, and I will tell you right now God will take what the tragedy of your life with all of its broken pieces, with all of its heartache, and God will begin the process to put that thing back together to make your life work. Do not be like the couple that that Saturday night the pastor told me their life was a mess. Do not be like the couple that Sunday morning that stood up there and were married for 60 years, but neither one of them did a thing for God in the fulfillment. God has something He wants you to do. That is why He wants to save you. That is why He wants you after you are saved to do those things that He wants you to do.

Now where our heads are bowed and no one is looking around, maybe you are a young man here today or a young lady, maybe you are a husband and wife, I do not know. Maybe you are an older couple, I do not know. But you know deep down in your heart you are not saved today. You know right now if you died you do not know for sure you would go to heaven. Every head bowed and every eye closed and no one looking around but me, would you let me pray for you? If you are not sure you are saved and God spoke to your heart today, would you let me pray for you? Would you just by putting up your hand right now with every head bowed and no one looking around but me, you would just say, "Bob, pray for me. I am not sure if I died right now, I would go to heaven. Here is my hand." Anybody? I am not sure if I died right now. God bless you, son. Anybody else? Anybody else? I am not sure if I died right now. God spoke to my heart today and here I am. I just want God to pray for me. I want to be better at everything that I do. Here is my hand. Anybody? Just wait for a second.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. These are good people. I thank You for the fact, Lord, that they are all saved today. I pray, Father, that based on what we have said today that the Holy Spirit of God would do the work and touch these lives and let these good young men today, Lord, good men. They are good men, Lord. There is not a bad one in the bunch. They are just not. I know a bad man when I see one. We do not have any. But help them get the right definitions. Help me to help them. Help me to love them. Help nobody to ever point their finger at them or castigate them, but to help them. Now, if they do not want help, Lord, that is another thing, but I do not even believe that. They would not stay here and put up with this abuse week after week. They did not want something changed in their life. Let them know that I

am here to help them. Lord, I pray for the young ladies, Lord, that help them. Help them understand their role. Help them understand what they can do, what they cannot do. Help them get into a better mindset of where they are at and what they can do and how to pray and how to be the witness and how to be everything that God wants them to be. Lord, we do not have any bad women here. I do not believe that. I just, I have been around people for too long. I can spot them a mile away. We do not have any bad women here. We just have good people who many times get caught up in the things of the world and make bad choices. We have all done that. I have done that. Lord, nobody can stand and point their finger at anybody else for what they have done. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God every day. But, Lord, help us to get back to a common ground with the Bible. Help those of us who have learned our lessons. Help those who have yet not learned theirs. Help us to reach out and to be there and to love them and to take the Word of God, to make them part of our family, to show them the truth and the beauty of God's Word. Lord, we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. Bless all the events today. Bless today at five as we, those that want to meet together at the park to have a great time and for tomorrow and all of the things that need to be done and just thank You for all that pitch in and make this a great day for our church, for the visitors that come. Let them leave knowing that we do care about them. We care about who they are. We care about their walk with God and we love them. Lord, the messages may not always be easy, but they will always be bathed in love and prayer and for the care of others in need. We will thank You now and praise You in Jesus' name. For Your sake we ask it. Amen.

John Christensen wants to meet his people up here for the crew. Do not forget if you want to come to the party and have not seen me, I see Jamie is back there. Go catch with her back there. She will go out to the table out there. God bless you. I will see you this afternoon with those that want to come. My guys that are going to cook with me, be it Steve Bracken at 7 in the morning. Ladies, I will see you at 2 o'clock here at my house. God bless you. You are dismissed.