



Daily Verse and Comment

Romans 7:1-3

(1) Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? (2) For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. (3) So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

King James Version

The law Paul refers to here is not explicitly stated in the [Old Testament](#); no verse in the Old Testament says a man and wife shall be married "until death do they part." Those words are nowhere in the Bible. Neither is the phrase, "as long as you both shall live," used in many wedding ceremonies, although it is implied in Romans 7. Nevertheless, the principle is unquestionably in both testaments, showing the continuity throughout God's Word.

Paul makes God's instruction about the marriage union very clear. Marriage is for life, except for a limited number of circumstances that are explained by both Christ in Matthew 19 (and related places in the other gospels) and Paul in I Corinthians 7. [God](#) says that He hates divorce in [Malachi 2:16](#), and He therefore provides only a bare minimum of "outs" from the marriage covenant.

The "marriage is for life" principle is definitely in the Bible. In [I Corinthians 7:10](#), Paul restates the church's teaching unequivocally: "Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband." With all the authority of an apostle of [Jesus Christ](#), Paul affirms God's desire

for a lifelong union, this time positing it in the negative. It should be added that, despite his commanding the wife not to depart from her husband, "what is good for the goose is good for the gander," as the saying goes.

[1 Corinthians 7:39](#) repeats the apostle's doctrinal statement from Romans 7, adding an interesting caveat: "A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord." The caveat concerns a person's conversion status. If a woman's husband dies while she is a member of the church, she is free to remarry, but "only in the Lord." In other words, she can marry only another converted member of the church, and without doubt, that is the best thing for her to do if she wishes to remarry.

Jesus comments on [Genesis 1:27](#) and 2:24 in [Mark 10:6-9](#):

But from the beginning of the creation, God "made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.

Clearly, the Bible consistently emphasizes lifelong marriage—from the Book's opening salvos in Genesis to Malachi, throughout the Gospels, in the epistles of the apostles, and even in the final chapters of Revelation. On the other hand, human beings try to find loopholes for splitting up. However, the Bible is not a book that provides many legal loopholes. In fact, it contains so few regulations concerning divorce that it takes a fair bit of scholarship to figure out exactly what Jesus and Paul, especially, mean when they give the few reasons for divorce. It is not simple but a matter that must be deeply considered.

Our God is a very positive God. Throughout His Book, He emphasizes His desire—His intent—for a man and a woman to remain married for life. As we see from Jesus' statement regarding marriage, the first two chapters of Genesis provide the core principles regarding marriage. Other biblical scriptures about marriage are based on what we read about the first human couple in Genesis 1-3. In the end, it comes down to one concept: A man and his wife are to be one flesh joined together by God. Jesus sums it up by

saying that, since "they are no longer two, but one flesh," they should not be separated.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Marriage—A God-Plane Relationship \(Part Six\)](#)

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